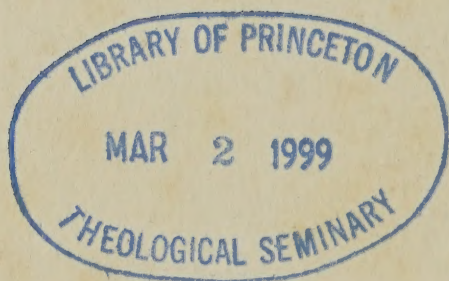


# YOU AND YOUR CHURCH

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J. S. KIRTLEY



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You and your church





# YOU AND YOUR CHURCH



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*By*

JAMES S. KIRTLEY, D. D.

Author of

"That Boy of Yours," "That Young Man and Himself,"  
"Twenty-six Days with Jesus"

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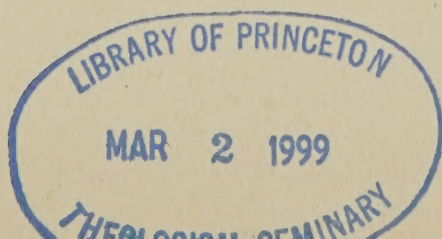
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DEDICATED

TO

MY CHILDREN

**George, Adelaide, Bess**



## FOREWORD

I HAVE embodied in these fifteen chapters much of what I have said to members of the church in personal conversations, in brief talks, and in more elaborate addresses. Many good brethren have urged me to put it all in book form and several Assemblies, Associations, Conferences, and Conventions have taken formal action requesting the publication of several of the addresses, especially the ones on the Baptist Distinctive and the Baptist Objective. The two last mentioned have been reconstructed and elaborated for this volume.

It would be useless to take the space at this point to state the many and very vital reasons why every member of our churches should grasp all the principles, ideals, and practices of the faith just at this stage of the world's history. What is involved in being a Christian, what is involved in being a church-member, what is involved in being a Baptist—these are questions of paramount concern. The greatest triumphs in the history of Christianity are triumphs in which Baptists have participated as no other body of

## *Foreword*

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Christians has ; but far greater triumphs await us if we are as wise in the coming day and generation as we have been in the past.

I have what seems a reasonable hope, that many members of our churches in the United States and Canada will read this effort to answer the questions mentioned above, and that many pastors and other leaders will find it a suitable textbook for classes in the study of these essentials in the religion of today and of the coming day.

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PART I

A CHURCH-MEMBER



# I

## BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

You are now a Christian, a follower of Christ; but you were not always so. You were born innocent of any sin, but with inherent possibilities of sinning and with inherent possibilities of becoming a Christian. And you became a Christian.

### 1. How?

1. *It came about* in the same way in which all the millions of Christians of the present and of the past became such: *through a personal choice of Christ*, made by yourself and for yourself, not made by some one else for you, but by you alone. Others may have chosen him for you and urged him upon you, may have helped you to understand, resolve, and act, but not till you chose him for yourself did you become a Christian.

Perhaps you had special help from the home. You may have been brought up so well, with Christ so dominant over the thoughts and ideals and interests and atmosphere of the home, that you fell under his influence without resistance or effort or hesitation or fear. You fell in with the ways of the home-makers as if they were your own from the beginning. Almost unconsciously you adopted their habits. You took over their religion by the instinct of imitation with which

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you had been endowed by nature. But there came a time when you felt that Christ must be the direct source of your own life as well as of theirs, and you made him your Saviour and Master as he was theirs, by the same sort of choice that they had once made. Then you began to form your own habits apart from theirs, dealing personally and directly with God through Christ, though still under the influence of those to whom you owed so much and still full of appreciation of them. You had felt your own need of him. There was no radical change in your life because there was so little to be changed. Your habits were right, there had been no development of any bad possibilities within you; but now Christ was at the center, and you would grow like him instead of growing like your parents. You have made this choice so early in life that you can say, as I have heard so many say, that you cannot remember the time when you were not a Christian. Perhaps young Timothy is a case in point. (Acts 16 : 1-3.) Your sense of sinfulness was not so acute at the first as it has since grown, for you will be discovering all the time how weak and liable you are to commit sin, sin of the thought or imagination or feeling or act.

On the other hand, you may have grown up in an environment in which you were not made to think of Christ in a personal way, and you grew in the wrong direction, whether you went into a life of much sinning or not, and, when the sense of need seized you, it was a very pungent sense

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of sinfulness and lostness. You recall the struggle you had with yourself before you could yield your will to his, or the way you groped about searching for him, crying to him to have mercy on you, when you did not know that his heart was even then overflowing with mercy and that he was trying to get your attention centered on his mercy and his strength so that he could save you. You can never tell how glad you were when you looked and lived and felt the sense of pardon and cleansing. You experienced what is told in John 3 : 14-18.

Or, possibly you are one of those who have gone deeply into sin, and you had an awakening which threw you into agony till at last Jesus spoke to your troubled soul, as he spoke to the waves of the sea, and said, "Peace, be still." It was like going from a cemetery into a banquet hall, from Cimmerian darkness into a land of rainbows. It had some elements like the experience of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9) or of the Philippian jailer. (Acts 16 : 19-34.)

You may even have gone so far as to commit some sin which humanity pronounces incurable, a sin with which only the stern laws of man can deal. There are many people in trouble to whom there is absolutely no way out but through the door of Christ's forgiving and cleansing and inspiring heart, and the laws of nature and of man must simply take their course. Such are the libertine, the murderer, the dope-fiend, the thief. I have in mind some men and even women who

were blackened by the most revolting sins and even crimes, who are now rejoicing in a Saviour's redeeming work. The scars will mark them forever, but they will also mark them as brands snatched from the burning. Take the case of the robber crucified with Jesus. (Luke 23 : 39-43.) Take the case of some eminent workers all over the country. Read again Paul's list of the signs of depravity in 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, and hear him say: "And such were some of you; but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."

The point is that, whichever class you belonged to, you became a Christian in the same way that every other one followed, and that was by a choice of Christ which brought him with his transforming and directing grace into your heart. You made the choice, whether quietly, as did Lydia and the Ethiopian treasurer and millions more, or amid upheaval and agony, as did Saul and the jailer and millions of others.

2. *Yet you became a Christian in a way different from that of any other one that ever lived*, for the simple reason that you are different from anybody else in the world, different from any one that ever did or ever will live, different in temperament, training, outlook, stage of experience, ways of feeling, thinking, and doing. Sometimes inquirers think they must become Christians just as other Christians say they did, even to the very circumstances and all the emotions. My own

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conversion at the age of sixteen was very vivid, with intense sense of need and with great joy when at last I apprehended Christ as my loving Saviour. A cousin of mine made the choice so early that she was not at all aware, at the time, of the vast significance of that choice, not aware of much difference after her acceptance of Christ. But the new life began at that point.

Then let me say again, that the two essentials in your becoming a Christian are, first, a sense of need, and, secondly, a reliance on Christ as Saviour, Teacher, Master, Guide, Friend; not trust for salvation in parents or teacher or minister or church, though you did not lack confidence in them, but confidence in Christ to do for you and with you what none of the others nor all combined could do. When you took him as your Saviour it was through that action of the soul which we call faith, trust, confidence, belief, and we sometimes illustrate it by the physical senses of touch, sight, taste, and the like. The sense of need we call conviction; the change of attitude toward sin we call repentance; the turning to him with reliance we call faith—all just as simple as it could be.

Your conversion was just like all others in the essentials, but unlike all others just as you are unlike other people.

### **2. Agencies**

Perhaps I should say the "instruments and agencies" that led you to make that choice. It

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is important to go over them for reasons that must be at once quite obvious. It will guide you in your attitude toward those agencies, and it will enable you to employ them in the interest of others.

Perhaps it was *example*, the example of some one who made you feel that you must be just such a Christian as that person, and you saw clearly that Jesus was the source of his life and must become the source of your goodness.

Or it may be that some one who knew your need made a *distinct and purposed appeal* to you that God used in awakening in you a sense of that need, till you saw that you were "without hope and without God in the world."

Or it may have come simply from reading *some awakening passage of the Bible* that gripped you and held you till you could yield to Christ. (Such as John 3 : 16; Matt. 11 : 28-30; Acts 17 : 30, 31; Rom. 5 : 1-11; 2 Cor. 5 : 10.)

Perhaps it was a *sermon* you heard, like the words which reached Tom Nowell's ears from the old sailors' chaplain, whom he had heard many a time, and had scorned, but now stopped and listened to him for a moment as he was speaking on the street corner in Seattle and telling the delinquents before him that if they would kneel down and honestly ask God to do what was possible for them, there was hope for every one of them. Tom reached a sudden determination and, hastening back to the opium-joint in which he had been lying for days in a cocaine stupor,

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he knelt down and put himself in God's hands and rose a new man.

It may have been *the thought of another's doom*, as was the case with Adoniram Judson. He had graduated at Brown University, but he was not a Christian. He was traveling through the country, and stopped for the night at an inn. During the night he heard the moaning of a sick man in an adjoining room and, on inquiring, learned that it was an old University friend of his who was dying. Judson exclaimed, "Dying and lost!" That was the thought which awakened him and led him to seek his Saviour.

Or there may have been *some special view of the Christ* whose heart was made to suffer because of your sins, as Saul of Tarsus caught a vision of Christ and heard him say, "Why persecutest thou me?"

But whatever the means by which it was done, your acceptance of Christ was brought about by the Spirit of God, who used the means to gain your attention and fix it on Christ, "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world," just as he is now using you and your efforts and your influence to get the attention of others who need Christ as you did. It is the Spirit who convicted you of sins. (John 16 : 8-11.) It is he who gave you rebirth in Christ.

Now you are a Christian, leading the most blessed life ever known or dreamed of, whether you are aware of all its blessedness or not, whether you are realizing all of its possibilities

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or not. Here are some passages of Scripture which tell you some important things about the life you are living: Matthew 5 : 3-11; 13; Romans 4 : 6-8; 2 Corinthians 4 : 6; 1 John 5 : 2; Revelation 21 to 22; Proverbs 4 : 18, 19.

## II

### JOINING THE CHURCH

#### I. WHY YOU DID IT

There was just one reason: you chose to do so. You had help in making that choice, but no one compelled you to make it.

There are three reasons why you made the choice:

##### 1. You Wanted To

Something within you prompted you. The very thing you wanted to do was to join the church. Even if no one had suggested it, you would have thought of it yourself, and if there had been no church to join, you would have wondered why there was not and would have been inclined to originate something of the sort yourself.

(1) It was *an instinct* of the new Christian nature to want to be associated with the rest of the followers of Christ because they and you were alike, had passed through the same experience, had the same interests, sustained the same relation to Christ. You were born into the household of faith when you were born again. "Birds of a feather flock together"—it was something like that.

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(2) There was *a new tie* binding you to them, the ligament of life, the new life in Christ. You felt the pull of it and have been feeling it ever since. It worked, whether you were conscious of it or not, whether you were working or resting or eating or thinking.

(3) There was born *a new ambition* in your soul, the ambition to impart what you had, even your innermost experience, an instinct to share all that you had, to pass it on as designed for others all the more because it had blessed you, as Paul wrote to the Romans, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift" (Rom. 1 : 11). That ambition was correlated to that which became the new law of your life, *the law of service*.

(4) You found *a new motive* in your heart, the motive of *love*. Love always corresponds to relationships, and there is a love exactly suited to any relationship into which you were born or may establish yourself. There is never any conflict between the different kinds of love when the relationships are rightly established and maintained; in fact, they intensify each other. You love your father all the more for loving your husband or wife or child or brother or sister or neighbor.

But here is a new variety of love, the love of Christians for each other, just as the love of brothers and sisters and all the rest is rudimentary in us when we are born into this life. This love is born in us when we are "born again."

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Of course, it must be cultivated and will suffer from neglect, but it is there at the start of the Christian life. It is called "love of the brethren," "brotherly love," and "Christian love." In accepting Christ you accepted all whom he had accepted. In coming into your heart he brought in all his friends with him. He brought that new love from heaven with him, and he transplants it into our hearts. A new variety of carnation was produced some years ago and a rich man in the East is said to have paid thirty thousand dollars for it. This new love added to all the other varieties is priceless. Paul speaks of it when he writes to the Thessalonians: "For, as concerning love of the brethren, ye have no need that one write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (1 Thess. 4 : 9). As a suitable love for the natural brother is born in you, so this love for the Christian brother is implanted in you when you are born again. It prompted you to join the church where the others were.

(5) *Gratitude* also prompted you to seek the church and Christian people. It was through them you had been brought to Christ—through the work and worship and efforts of their church, their prayers for you, their influence over you, their instructions. You felt that the church as a whole, as well as definite individuals, had had some part in leading you to the great decision. You wanted to show your gratitude by telling them so, by being with them, by doing something

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for them, and by helping them do for others what they had done for you.

(6) *Self-interest* of an unselfish sort led you to seek the church. You felt your need of other Christians. Their fellowship and friendship would strengthen and safeguard you; your heart would find rest among them; your judgment would be confirmed in its convictions by them; your spiritual needs required a home and a home love—a thing you felt very keenly, even before you tried to understand the full meaning of the hunger you had for this company and companionship.

Some of the members did not attract you by their natural gifts or their attainments; but there was one respect in which they all seemed attractive: they all belonged to Christ, they represented Christ, even though they may not have done so with satisfaction to you or to themselves.

### **2. The People in the Church Wanted You to Join**

(1) *They had the same interest in you* that you had in them. They wanted you with them as much as you wanted to be with them.

(2) *You were*, in a true sense, *the child of the church*, and they had that sort of love for you. They wanted to do still more for you, and they knew they could not do very much for you while you were on the outside.

(3) *They knew from experience what you needed* and knew far better than you did what you would lose if you failed to join them.

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(4) *They had a desire for self-preservation*, which increased their desire to have you come in, for they knew that, if those whom they led to Christ did not join, the church would soon cease to exist, and there would be no more cooperative effort for the salvation of others from sins.

(5) *They needed you and knew it*, felt it, needed you to help them win others to Christ. It is a delight to them to have new coworkers in that blessed enterprise.

(6) *The bond that bound them to you*, the bond of the new life in Christ, *was felt just as keenly by them as by you*; the law of the new life in Christ, the law of service, is the law under which they think of you and they would serve you; the motive of the new life, the motive of love, is one they feel keenly and constantly. The church would atmosphere and motivate your life.

### **3. Christ Wanted You to Join**

(1) *He knew that your nature required that you get into the group with the rest of the disciples*. He knew that, with your inclination to get with them and their inclination to have you with them, there would be a getting together anyhow and that, unless he took charge of it, there would be serious blunders. He arranged for it in the very best possible way.

(2) *He knew how important it is that you confess him, and he planned it so that you could do so in the most effective manner*. There is a value in confessing him. He knew all about that,

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and he would not let you miss it. In confessing him you had your experience of him made more vivid and enduring, you brightened the experiences of others, and you made a direct appeal to those who were not then Christians. It tested your fidelity to him and was your testimony to his power. It gratified Christ and made it possible for him to confess you in the presence of his Father and the holy angels. (Matt. 10 : 32, 33.)

(3) *He knew how important it was that you be properly classified.* There is a chapter in Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" on the subject of the significance of classification that everybody should read. In being classified with your own people, you are reinforced with what they have, you are protected with their strength, you are at once a preacher, using their voice. Confession crystallizes the sentiments; classification with other Christians socializes them.

(4) *He wanted to see you cared for.* Not till children may grow up just as well outside as inside the family and the home will it ever be possible for Christians to be just as good outside the church as inside. Flowers may grow along the roadside and still be flowers, but they do a great deal better in a well-cultivated garden. No one wants to ask the question whether he can live a Christian life without confessing Christ and becoming classified with his people, but you simply ask, What does Christ think about it and

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what does he wish? There is a sense in which the church is a home and a school and a hospital, but the purpose is to make home-makers and teachers and soldiers out of those who enter.

(5) *He wanted you to be made one with the others*, socialized, brigaded with them, to use one of our military terms. He is building a body out of the total of his disciples. There are three striking symbols of that body. One is the human body. He is the head, and we are the members. The head does the thinking and directs the activities of the body, using the members as it will, but it depends on the body to execute its thoughts and plans. Another figure is that of the vine and its branches. The vine is the source of life and fruitfulness to the branches, all the vitality and all the material for leaves and fruit coming up from the roots through the trunk line; but the vine is dependent on the branches to manifest that life and bear the fruit. A third impressive figure is that of a building and its foundation or cornerstone. Christ is the foundation of faith and life, "and other foundation can no man lay," but the stones laid on it are similar to it, are "living stones," and all together they "grow into a living temple," "a spiritual house."

In thus unifying you with others he has done these two things for you: (a) he has been *individualizing you*, has made you more yourself than if you had been allowed to "run wild" out in the world. A hand is not less a hand because it is a part of the whole body, but rather is made

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more distinctive by being one of many members of the same body. Its functions have been set off against those of the foot and the ear and the eye. If there were no foot the hand would try to be a foot too, and that is never a very successful way of utilizing the hand. Your own traits and activities are delimited by association with others, and your individuality is developed as it could not be if you were alone.

(b) He has been *socializing you*. That is, he makes you part of the body. It is a hand working with foot and ear and eye and nose. The result is that he reenforces you with all the other members and reenforces them with you. The strength of the hand is imparted to all the other members either in its structural relations with them or in the ministry it seeks to render to them. Responsibilities make you both more yourself and more theirs.

As a result of that socialization your life *functions* in new ways, achieves new products. One function is that of united *prayer*. Jesus knew what was possible in that line, for he says: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything which they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18 : 19, 20). In Acts 2 and 3 we see how this common and persistent prayer together preceded and prepared for the coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

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*Worship* becomes a new thing, a composite of the adoration of many souls. Your walk with them is a march, a drill, a social advance upward. Your work is your own part of the common task that blends the spirits of the workers in the product. It is a united attack on sin and a united building of the structure of society. You develop the possibilities of a nature that has the multitudinous element in it.

The result within you is the development of the three great elemental Christian impulses, love of the brethren, obedience to Christ, and the spirit of serving.

The *method* by which he had you make that *confession* was in itself designed by him to preserve the experiences of the soul and proclaim them, thereby intensifying and imparting them. Of course there was a ceremony. We are so constituted that some sort of formula is needed as a means of symbolizing something and committing us to something. The greatest event in the history of the world was the death and resurrection of Jesus; the greatest experience you ever had was your experience in choosing him as your Saviour and Teacher and Master, and thereby dying to the past and rising to the future; the greatest hope you cherish for the future is that of the resurrection of the body. Well, Jesus put all three of these into a symbol that met you at the door of the church. The purpose of baptism was to set forth in a symbol those three experiences of resurrection. Jesus was wondrously

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wise in arranging it so. You preached the gospel, saying in a living tableau, "This is what saved me, the death and resurrection of Christ." You told your experience in the same way, as you said, without a spoken word, "This is how it saved me, by my death to the past with its sins and my resurrection to the future with its salvation." You also proclaimed your hope of a future resurrection of the body in that same way. (Rom. 6 : 3-5.)

Jesus arranged all of that with a view to giving you pleasure, impressing all who saw it that he died for our sins and rose for our justification, and that we may die to sin and rise to a new life. So we see that the ceremony at the church door did not destroy anything that was in your experience, but expressed and confirmed and enlarged it all.

We can imagine his joy in seeing you confess him.

### II. HOW YOU JOINED

You will recall three things:

#### 1. Your Confession

It was your confession, not of yourself, but of your Saviour; not of your goodness, but of his; not of your faith, but of the Saviour in whom your faith rested; not of your purposes, but of the Saviour whom you purposed to love and trust and serve. You confessed him as a Saviour whom you actually trusted for salvation,

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for teaching, for guidance. You became a Christian when you made the inner decision to accept Christ. The will acted on the matter. That settled it. Then you confessed Christ.

You may have had much emotion and you may have had very little. That is a matter of temperament, or experience, or circumstances, or all combined. Many people take that decision quietly, like Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul" (Acts 16 : 14)—whose heart the Lord opened like a flower as the sun calls it to awake—or like the Ethiopian treasurer who leaned upon Jesus and took his hand and was saved. Others are awakened with a storm of sorrow, like the jailer at Philippi (Acts 16), or like Paul himself on that mad, wild ride to Damascus. (Acts 9.)

All you needed in joining the church was to give evidence that you had actually accepted Christ and intended to live as his follower—just that, nothing more. The rest would come in the path of duty and service. You did not join the church to become a Christian, but to lead a Christian life. It was not through the church to Christ, but through Christ into the church.

### **2. Your Acceptance by the Church for Membership**

In some churches they ask candidates for membership to meet the deacons, or a standing committee, who make some private investigation and

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then bring the case before the church in a public way. In other churches the habit is to invite the candidate to come before the whole church in the first instance and make the statement in public. The vote of the church settles the matter, in either case.

### **3. Your Baptism**

In your careless days you may have thought of baptism as a singular, almost grotesque thing, about which people could make humorous remarks quite easily. But, when you came to be baptized, it was a most unique experience. It did not save you or give you the consciousness of being a Christian—it could not; but it did give you the consciousness of having done your Master's will so far. It told in a living tableau what did save you and how it saved you and what you hoped for in the future. Jesus was wonderfully wise in giving us only two ordinances and in putting into those ordinances as in a mold the whole content of the gospel.

At this point it may be well to say something about the form of baptism. I have taken its real form for granted in all my allusions to it up to this point and, in the chapter on The Great Distinctive, I give the historical story of the way the form came to be changed.

If you were asked, What is the form of baptism? you could answer that there is only one way to find out: Go to the dictionary as you would in looking up any other word. In this

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case you would have to go to the Greek dictionary, as the words "baptize" and "baptism" are not English words. They were *baptizo* and *baptisma* in Greek, one the verb telling the doing, and the other the noun telling what is done. These words were not translated into our language, they were only transferred and their final syllables adapted to our language. When we go, then, to the various Greek dictionaries, or lexicons, as they are called, we find that the twenty odd dictionaries are perfectly agreed in saying that the verb baptize means to dip, to plunge, to overwhelm, to immerse. They also say that there is a distinct verb for sprinkle, *rantizo*; also one for pour, *ekcheo*; and that their meanings are always separate. For this ordinance which we call baptism, of course there is only the one word used. That is the reason we always say baptism. If the word for sprinkling, or pouring, was ever used when reference was made to the ordinance, we could not take it over into our language by the term baptism, but would have to say *rantism* or use the word for pour.

That strictly settles the matter. But there are several subsidiary ways of confirming the findings of the dictionaries.

In support of the meaning of the words *baptizo* and *baptisma*—"baptize" and "baptism," as we say in English—you have only to note the circumstances connected with the administration of the ordinance. John was baptizing, and the people came to him, and "they were baptized by

him in the river Jordan " (Matt. 3 : 6). " Jesus came from Nazareth, and was baptized of John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water " (Mark 1 : 9, 10). " And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there " (John 3 : 23). The Ethiopian treasurer " went down into the water " and " came up out of the water " (Acts 8 : 38, 39).

Another confirmation is found in the significance of the ordinance itself as a symbol. I have already spoken of what it was given for and its symbolic character. Read Romans 6 : 3-5 about being "*buried* with him by baptism into death."

In his " Spirit of Christianity " Hegel thus refers to baptism: " John's custom of immersing his disciples in water was an important symbol. There is no feeling so homogeneous to the desire for the infinite as the desire to be buried in water. The one who plunges in faces a foreign element that at once completely surrounds him and makes itself felt at every point of his body. He has only felt water, that touches him where he is, and he is only where he feels it. There is no hole in the water, no limitation, no variety or definiteness. The feeling of it is the most unscattered and simple. The immersed person comes out into the light, separates himself from the water, is divided from it and yet drips from it all around. As it leaves him the world takes on form again, and he steps back strengthened into the manifold state of consciousness again. While he was im-

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mersed he had but one feeling ; the world was forgotten, and he was in a solitude that had cast everything away, unwound itself from everything. Baptism was a getting out of the past, and an enthusiastic consecration to a new world."

Still another is the practice of the early Christians and the curious way in which sprinkling and pouring came to be adopted as substitutes. A full account of that is given in the chapter on The Great Distinctive. Ancient art preserves the evidence in the old baptisteries.

While these several confirmations of the real form of baptism are interesting and pleasing, they are really not required. The meaning of the word is established by the dictionaries so fully that no competent scholar claims that sprinkling and pouring are anything but substitutes for real baptism, though many seek to justify the continued use of the substitutes. The grounds on which they do so are wholly at variance with true reasoning and, if the matter were not so serious, they would often be ludicrous in the extreme.



## PART II

# WHAT YOU FOUND IN THE CHURCH



# I

## ANOTHER CEREMONY

### THE LORD'S SUPPER

#### 1. What It Is

It is a supper of bread and wine, to be eaten by the disciples at intervals. It is not a full meal or an effort to gratify hunger and thirst. In fact, it is not needed for physical strength or refreshing, but for the good of the soul. A pinch of the bread and a sip of the wine are enough.

#### 2. What It Means

Bread stands as the type of all kinds of food, and the juice of the grape is representative of all invigorating beverages. The two, then, are symbols of what sustains the soul. The real Sustainer of the soul is Christ. Long before he established the ordinance he told the people that. He said: "I am the bread which came down out of heaven"; "I am the bread of life"; "your fathers ate manna in the wilderness and died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever" (John 6 : 41-51). He is also the

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living water. To the woman at the well he said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (John 4 : 10). "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7 : 37). The bread and the wine are the two symbols of his life, and together they give the complete idea of him as the one source and sustenance of our life. As we partake of them in a physical way, so we partake of him in a spiritual way.

But the bread must be broken and the wine poured out before they can be taken into the system. So his body has been broken by the hammer of hate and his veins have been opened that his life might be given up as well as given out for us, then given to us, then reproduced in us.

There is a close connection between these two ceremonies, baptism and the Supper. The two complete one great idea. Baptism symbolizes the emergence of the soul into new life in Christ; the Supper symbolizes the feeding of that new life on him, the "hidden manna," the "bread of heaven." As birth takes place only once and is followed by frequently taking what nourishes life, so baptism comes once for all, while the Supper comes at intervals to signify that the life must be constantly nourished. "As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." We shall keep it up "till he comes."

### **3. How Observe It**

Paul says we must do it "worthily." That does not raise the question of whether you are worthy either of the gift of life or of the ordinance which symbolizes his care of that life by the gift and impartation of himself, for you are not worthy and never will consider yourself worthy, yet you will strive to become worthy. But the way you observe this Supper may be an entirely worthy or unworthy way. The Corinthians did it very unworthily, because they thought of it as a regular feast to which they could come and eat all the bread they wanted and drink all the wine they could get hold of. So Paul tells them to "examine yourselves" and see that you have the right idea about it. The "worthy" way is to discern the symbol within the substance, eat and drink knowing what it is for, and respond to its meaning.

### **4. Wrong Views**

There have been wrong views developed. Of course. That's the way we have done with almost everything God has given us. What gift of his have we not perverted both in our views and in our use of it?

One wrong view is that the bread and the wine, under the invocation of the one who administers it, becomes the veritable, actual body and blood of Christ. How this perversion came about will be discussed more fully in the chapter on The

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Great Distinctive. Both baptism and the Supper came to be regarded as saving rather than symbolic ordinances. Heathen who came into the church in the very early days brought that idea, and they also brought the idea of a sacred order called priests, who were necessary in administering the ordinances and gave to them a magical power. This is the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, and they call it *transubstantiation*. That is, the substance is changed, under the blessing of the priest, into the actual body and blood of Christ. That is the chief reason why the priest drinks the wine, for it would not do to spill a single drop of it, as might happen in passing it around among the people, while the people eat the bread because there is not so much danger of losing any of it.

When Jesus said of the broken bread, "This is my body," and of the wine, "This is my blood, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins," he used a very familiar figure of speech which we call a metaphor. If he had said, "This is like my body," etc., it would have been a simile, which is an expanded metaphor. But the metaphor is an implied or unexpanded simile and means exactly the same as if it had been expanded.

There is another view called *consubstantiation*. This was the view of Luther, who denied that the bread and wine were changed into the veritable body and blood of Jesus, but affirmed that his "real presence" was there "in, with, and under

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the bread and wine," and that it was a means of grace because you actually partook of him. When told that Christ was only at the right hand of God, he replied that the right hand of God was anywhere and everywhere.

John Calvin modified that view somewhat by saying that, while the bread and wine are signs of the body and blood of Christ, they are the instrumental means of his presence, and the Supper is therefore a means of grace.

Zwingli was nearer the true view in saying that the Supper is a memorial or remembrance of the sacrifice offered once for all by Christ, and that it is not a continuance or repetition of the original sacrifice of Christ, as taught by the Roman Church, and by Luther and Calvin in a modified way, also by some others.

Thus we see that what is known as *sacramentalism* changes the two ordinances to be something entirely different from what Christ designed them to be. That view is held by the Church of England as well as by the other churches referred to. Sacramentalism is usually wrapped up in what is known as *sacerdotalism*, the existence of a sacred order in whom the church really centers, so that the institution and the official are so necessary to Christianity that it cannot exist apart from them. Everything is created by the successors of the apostles, and the ordinances are the channels through which God's grace flows to the people; the bishop is the successor of the apostles; the priest is ordained by him;

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without the priest there cannot be full worship of God; the sacraments, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, are the means that must create and maintain the spiritual life. Baptism is "the great sacrament of our regeneration," and the Supper, or Eucharist as it is termed, "our chief means of communion with our Lord." As R. J. Campbell puts it, "The incarnation, the atonement, the extension of both in the sacraments, the ministry which guards them, and the visible society itself as the sphere of sacrificial grace—all these seem to me to imply each other."

All of which is foreign to the simplicity of the gospel. The ordinances are not sacraments in any such sense. They cannot save. They cannot constitute a channel through which the grace of God is extended to us. Such an idea shockingly "limits the universality of divine grace," as Doctor Fairbairn points out, and conditions the grace by imperfect men.

In order to observe the Supper properly you should prepare for it. You do that by mentally seeing the fact that Christ died for you, and this vivid object-lesson of our sustenance by him is only a dull hint of the glory that is in the actual experience. The object-lesson keeps the truth clear in the mind, appeals to the heart for its gratitude and devotion, and stimulates the resolution to become more worthy of it all.

You prepare for it by your experience in living by him and doing his will. That stimulates the hunger and the thirst of the soul and gives a more

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vivid sense of the truths set forth in the symbol.

In many of our churches a covenant-meeting is held at the prayer-meeting preceding the observance of the Supper, and at such a meeting the thoughts turn toward the essential idea in the Supper. That is a good preparation.

Regularity in attending is the best sort of preparation. If it should be impossible to attend but one meeting in the month, let it be the Communion service.

## II

### A BROTHERHOOD

On joining the church, you found yourself in the midst of a brotherhood and an actual member of it.

That meant three things:

#### 1. Kinship

All the members were your spiritual kin in Christ, unless, as may sometimes be the case, there was one, here and there, who had not really been born again. With such possible exceptions, you had all been reborn, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1 : 13). The source of that new life is God, the agent of it is the life-giving Spirit of God, and the type after which you were reborn is Jesus the Elder Brother. You found a family, and you became at once and without any further conditions as much a member of that family as the oldest and most honored son or daughter. Potential childship to God had become actual through your vital union with Christ.

There are several duties that grow out of that kinship. First is the duty to get acquainted with all your kinsfolk. They are the best people there

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are. They will be an honor to you, even those who are not prominent or mighty. Secondly, make it easy for them to take you into their fellowship, and comfortable to them while you are in. Do not be offish. Do not wait to be coaxed or especially noticed. Thirdly, live up to the family ideals and traditions. You are no longer isolated. You represent all the others; in fact, the whole family. The general estimate of the family of faith will depend on the way you represent them. If the reputation of that family in the community has been lowered by some unfortunate or erring member, it will be one of your most sacred duties to restore its standing. There will always be varieties of view on many matters, but the exposure of the home interests to outside and prejudiced onlookers will be a most dastardly bit of unfaithfulness. Keep the family secrets safe.

### 2. Equality

(1) *No Privileged Classes.* In certain countries where they have "classes" ordained by law, or by custom and tradition, those who are called the "nobility" constitute the "privileged class," but there are none in this family, even though some may have developed habits at variance with the law of equality. When such habits are found, they are in violation of Christian principles, and are due to the weaknesses and faults which those principles are seeking to correct. They violate the law of the family of faith.

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(2) *No Distinctions Within the Family.* In some countries there are distinctions made in favor of the firstborn child, called the law of primogeniture, under which the oldest son inherits the highest title, a larger part of the estate, and the honor of being the family representative in a legal and social way. Not so with your church. You are just as much a representative as the oldest and highest member, and all the fame and honors and reputation and influence of the family are yours. All of us are equal before Christ, the Elder Brother. If the Head of the family has any favorites at all, it must be the most needy or those who serve most and best.

(3) *No one has authority over your beliefs,* and you have all the rights and privileges that any one else has, even though there may be great inequality in talent and attainments and personal values. Whatever authority may be invested in given officers, it is so invested only for a given period and purpose. It comes from God and reaches them through the church, and you have the same right to say who shall hold the office that any other member of the church has.

(4) *Because of that equality there are at least two duties to be urged upon you:* First, if you are superior to any of the others in natural gifts and attainments, you must hold those gifts and attainments for the benefit of all and must bestow them on the others, and not in a grudging or reluctant way, as of necessity, but cheerfully, joyously, as paying a debt, a debt that grows greater

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with the effort to discharge it. You must recognize, then, that the others have a right to all you know and are and have, in the way of spiritual value. Secondly, if you are inferior to any of the members in your attainments, it is your right, not privilege merely, but right, to avail yourself of their gifts and graces and powers and thereby enrich and empower yourself. Some of your fellow members may be distinguished intellectually, or socially, or for eloquence or skill as religious workers, or for personal influence or prominence in their callings, but their fame is your fame, their honors yours, their worth your worth.

### **3. Community of Interests**

You have many things in common besides equality of rights and privileges.

(1) Whatever interests the church as a whole has, each member has—evangelistic, educational, missionary, benevolent. To each group in the church duties are assigned, yet to each group belong the interests of the other groups. The Sunday school worker is always interested in the work of the young people, and the Ladies' Aid is not at all indifferent to the interests of the Juniors or the Boys' Band. Whatever section you serve in, you belong to all. Whatever knowledge you have, whatever wisdom, it belongs to all. It must go to the market-place and not be wrapped up in a napkin. You can never learn any truth that does not belong to your brethren. (1 Tim. 6 : 17-19.)

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(2) Experiences are held in common, even those that are most personal. Your joys and sorrows are distributed to your fellow members. Even the worst experience and the lack of experience are held in common.

(3) Your very faults belong to the other members. You will learn that one of the most interesting things about people is their faults. They make you feel comfortable. It is almost a pleasure to find that others have faults as well as yourself. That fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind. You say to yourself, "He hath but stumbled in the path thou hast in weakness trod." The faults of others show you how not to do and inspire you to unselfish efforts in their behalf, for you have the guardianship of your brothers and sisters in Christ and you must help them to mend their ways, and do it in a loving, Christlike way. They help you to correct your own faults. It helps you to cultivate wisdom and tact and goodness. You not only have to live with people who, like yourself, have faults, but you have to help them overcome. (Gal. 6 : 1-3.)

Now, in view of this community of interest with your brethren, here are several very plain duties:

It is of primary importance that you make it as easy as possible for them to get along with you. "Consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Learn to do cooperative work, not only with the few who are easy to work with but with even

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the most uncongenial and least companionable and interesting.

Master the art of making their interests your own and do it without seeming to intrude or to regard yourself as their superior.

Try to become a wise counselor to whom people will come of their own accord, knowing that you can be trusted with delicate confidences and weighty responsibilities of sympathy.

### III

## AN ORGANISM

### 1. An Organization

In coming into this brotherhood you found not a mere aggregation of so many individuals, but an organization; not a mob for guerrilla warfare, but an army for regular service, coordinated, co-operative, and, when in action, "terrible as an army with banners"; not simply so many members of the body called the church, but the body itself of which you are a member; not simply so many living stones piled up together in impromptu order, or disorder, but all "growing into an holy temple" whose walls glow with light and expand by the laws of the heavenly architecture upward and outward; not simply children of the Father, but members of the Father's household, "the household of faith." Organization in living objects means two things: structure and function. Together you and the rest of them form a structure, and together you perform functions that require more than one person.

### 2. An Organism

It is not only an organization but an organism, as implied above. You are not only brought together, but "born" together; that is, "born

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again " individually into a " together " spirit and destiny ; brought together, not by external power, but by the inner pressure of the Spirit of God who dwells within you. So the word " organism " seems more apt than the word " organization," for, in all living things, it is life that produces organization with its structure and functions, but organization does not produce life. Mechanism means death, while organism means organization plus the life that produces it. You are in a living body.

(1) You found that *this organism*, which we call a church, is *self-directive*. Just as all the individuals in the group have equal access to God and to people, so each group has the same right to deal directly with God as any other group. There is no body in authority over the group that you belong to.

At this point it will be well to classify the different types of church government, or polity, with which the world is familiar. One is the prelatical, or *episcopal* type. *Episcopos* is the Greek word which means overseer and is translated bishop. An episcopacy means government by bishops or grades of officials above the local church. There are grades of this sort of government all the way from the absolute autocracy of the Church of Rome, which does not permit its members to interpret, and does not really permit them to read, the Bible, does all their religious thinking for them, and takes complete charge of their souls, to the Protestant Episcopal Church,

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in which government comes down to the local church from above it, on to the Methodist Church where there is more real democracy than in any other form of the episcopacy.

The *presbyterial* is another form of church polity, which is government of the local church by elders, the term presbyter being the English equivalent of the Greek word *presbuteros*, "elder." This is an overhead government of the local church through its representatives in presbyteries. Elder and bishop in the New Testament designate one and the same office, each indicating a special phase or function of it, the term pastor being the one term that covers all those functions.

The third form of government is the *congregational*. Each group governs itself, while many groups, which we call local churches, cooperate in what we call associations and conventions. They organize such bodies and control them, are not controlled by them, and they thereby carry out their own plans of larger cooperation.

That was the original form of church government. If each individual has as much right to deal with God and his fellow men as any one else, so each group of individuals has as much right to be self-directive as any other group. There is every evidence that the New Testament churches were autonomous and that there was room for the fullest cooperation of all the congregations.

The idea has three special considerations in its favor, in addition to the fact that the New Tes-

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tament churches were independent in their organization, democratic, as we may say. First, it is in harmony with the most fundamental function of the human soul, namely, its right of self-direction. No one loses that right in entering a group of others that have the same right, nor does that group lose its autonomy. Secondly, it is in harmony with the present trend in human development. Democracy is the predestined form of human government, in State and in Church. Thirdly, those who hold to the congregational form of government are the ones whose agitation has produced those religious revolutions and reformations that have resulted in civil democracy and freedom over the earth, as well as religious liberty.

The objection has been raised that church democracy is too good for human nature, and the objection is valid if we think of unregenerate human nature, but it is just exactly the thing for regenerate men and women. That is the only kind of people for membership in any church. It has been said that people need a stronger form of government to hold them together, but the bond of a new life in Christ is mightier than any sort of legal or mechanical ties. The ligaments of life and of love are stronger than death and sin and all human weakness. A regenerate church-membership is fitted for self-government, and no other kind is.

This organization is doing three distinct things for you:

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First, it is conserving your individuality with all its vital powers. A religious paternalism, an autocracy, would be a mechanism, even though it might be a very powerful one, and you would be a cog, or bolt, or some other subordinate part in the machine. There is individuality in you, and the church preserves and develops that. There is a multitudinous element in you, and it develops that. There is a hunger in you, and it satisfies that. There is a helplessness in you, and it energizes that. There is a desire in you to impart, and it provides for that. You are even more of an individual than when you came in. Yes, it preserves your individuality while socializing you.

Secondly, it disciplines and nurtures the life. It does that by its worship, by its instruction, by the watch-care of the stronger over the weaker, by the work it provides for you to do in an individual way, and especially by the work you do in a cooperative way, by the attitude you take toward the others and toward the world at large, and by "the work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope" to which it prompts you. It suppresses no one but draws you into the highest expression of self and secures the finest discipline and development.

Thirdly, it completes you by socializing you. You are associated with people in every stage of growth, each "going on unto perfection, all growing into a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," growing

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up "in all things unto him who is the head, even Christ, from whom all the building fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love" (Eph. 4 : 15, 16).

(2). *In order to be self-directive, this organization has leadership.* Not drivership, for there's no place for a driver in the church. Nor does it mean headship, for there is no head of the church, whether we mean the local group, or use the word loosely to mean organized Christianity, save the Lord Jesus Christ whom God gave "to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1 : 22, 23).

Leadership is essential to any working body, for evident reasons. In the church there are two types of work, and therefore we have two kinds of leaders, or officers, if we prefer the latter term. That is, it is in the nature of the group to require two kinds of leadership.

There is what we may call the spiritual leadership. That is an inclusive term, and it means those who lead in the development of character and the conduct of work by preaching, teaching, directing work, shepherding the people.

We call them by several names, mostly pastor, though the terms "elder" and "bishop" refer to the same office, each one emphasizing a special phase of the service rendered. The term "pastor"

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means a "shepherd," and the pastor does what the Eastern shepherd did for his flock, he feeds them, as Jesus said to Peter three times, "Feed my sheep," "Feed my lambs." He also weighs their duties and aids them, as the old elders of the Jews did, the word elder meaning the "aged," just as did the Latin word "senator." He "oversees" as director of work. We sum it all up in the term pastor or minister. The latter means servant, and that fully describes his work.

The other office is that of deacon. This word also means servant, and the office was instituted to serve the people on the more material side. It has followed the people in their needs and aids the pastor in still more intimate ways.

The two are the permanent New Testament offices. Paul gives instructions to the young minister Timothy (1 Tim. 3 : 1-15) about the officers of the church, calling them bishops and deacons. He addresses his letter to the Philipians "to all the saints," and adds "with the bishops and deacons." Peter writes about the same office and calls it that of elder (1 Peter 5 : 1-4), and says, "The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder," which means the same office as bishop, and he tells the elders what to do, how to act the pastor—"feed the flock," adding, "When the great Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory." We never take the time to use all these three words, but we convey them all in the word pastor or minister.

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These two officers are required in the very nature of the organization, and each one is called into action as need requires.

There are other leaders required for specific work, like teachers and trustees, visitors, helpers with the poor, directors of education and missions and music. They are needed in the complex life into which we are growing, but those named above are the two structural offices of the church, given by the Master for its efficiency and success, and are therefore permanent.

(3) *There are three requirements of all the officers and leaders of the church:*

First of all, they must be *chosen* for the work. They are to be servants, and they must be chosen, not by themselves, but by the members of the church; not by some other church, nor by some group of officials over the church, for there is no group higher in authority than the local church itself, but by the local church which they are to serve. In that choice you have a voice and a vote, and it counts one just as any other vote counts one, even though others may be older in years and experience and wisdom and personal influence. That right may never be taken away from you by any one or any group. It is yours as long as you are in the church. When they needed "the seven" in the church at Jerusalem, Peter did not say, "I'll look out some suitable men for the place," but he said to the church, "Look ye out from among you seven men," and all had a voice in it.

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Secondly, they must have actual or potential *fitness* for the position to which they are appointed. The office is not hereditary, nor is the fitness hereditary or official, but personal. Natural gifts and training, spiritual graces and experience give their varying fitness. There must also be fitness that grows with experience in the work. When any one shows that he is not fitted, or declines in the fitness that he showed at the beginning, he should be retired from the office in a Christlike way. You are under obligation to participate in all of this.

Thirdly, all must have the spirit of *service*. That's what the words "minister" and "deacon" mean. The Master said he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for all, and he asks, "Is the servant above his Lord?" Peter warned those who are in positions of leadership not to "lord it over God's heritage," but to "feed the flock of God . . . willingly, . . . of a ready mind" (1 Peter 5 : 2, 3).

### **3. Therefore Your Duties in the Case**

(1) *Be a sound member of the body of Christ*, not a diseased member, like a sore foot that cannot walk on errands, or a palsied hand that cannot lift, or a stiff shoulder that cannot get under burdens, or a blind eye that cannot see the tasks that are near you, or a bad heart that gives out under the strain of work, or a deaf ear that cannot hear the calls for help. Be a good, sound member.

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(2) *Never fail to exercise your right or face your obligation to have a part in the selection of those who are to lead.* You must always be able to say heartily, "my pastor" and "my deacons." If you do not, you become atrophied; you will excuse yourself from obvious duties; you will become a disturber; you will make yourself in a degree an outsider.

(3) *Support them so that they can succeed.* They cannot succeed unless you do support them. Help them by following them in the work in which you and the others ask them to lead. Remember that it was you who conferred the power on them. When you think they are failing, remember they may be failing simply for the lack of the support you might give them. That may save them from humiliating failure and save the cause from injury. Honor requires that you support them. Self-respect requires it.

(4) *Make yourself so efficient in any work you do in the church that you will be ready for any position that is offered you.* You prepare for it unconsciously by being faithful to every duty assigned to you and by trying to understand the duties of the positions held by others. Be prepared to answer God's call to the ministry or to other work that needs you.

## IV

### ACCUMULATED TREASURES

Of course you didn't find everything perfect in the church, but you found treasures that had been accumulating for centuries.

#### 1. Treasures of Truth

The big ideas of life were there. They had been gathered from the Scriptures, from the teachings of the great students and preachers and from Christian people of all kinds. They had been reduced to practice, and that has clarified them, defined them, and made them human. They were not shut up in the church or in the Bible, for all truths are for all people, but they had been massed and humanized among the people of God.

There is *truth about God*, as disclosed by Jesus and by the writers of the Bible and tested in life by God's people. This was ready for distribution in the church—the truth as to God's majesty and mercy, his greatness and his grace. There is *truth about the origin of man*, his sins, his struggles, his perfections in Christ, the sacredness of life, its possibilities. *Truth also about home and human relationships, God's ownership of us, and*

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*our stewardship over our possessions, our responsibility for the care of mankind.* All the big ideas of life were in that group which you entered, and they were worked out in practice, refined by use, illuminated in character.

### **2. Treasures of Ideals**

That means the attitude people take toward the truths they hold or are taught as they use their imaginations about life and mankind and God and Jesus. They dream dreams and see visions. They create an atmosphere. You come to see what they see, but in your own way. You breathe in the atmosphere. You found ideals of that sort, held by imperfect people who were often unchristlike, but there is purity in them, and your own vision is clarified.

### **3. Treasures of Habit**

There are habits of worship, and you fell into them, modifying them by your own experience; habits of Bible study which have helped you to work out your own method of using the great book; habits of giving, for you found the people using their money for the glory of God and under his guidance, thereby indicating both where and how you might meet your Lord's wishes for you; habits of interpreting God's movements and enterprises in the world that throw light on your own life and make for you one of the most interesting exercises of mind and heart; habits of work.

### 4. Treasures of Character

The best people in the world, taking them all together, are in the church. Their characters are your joy. They show the direction which your own development will take, show your possibilities, lure you on in realizing them. All possible virtues are there, some in full bloom, some in the budding stage, others only a prophecy. The characters of the church people became your possession. They enrich you.

All these treasures have been gathering for centuries for you. You had nothing to do with producing them. Thousands of people have been bringing them there for you. Remember the lines of Sam Walter Foss:

This rose I cut with careless shears,  
And wear and cast away,  
The cosmos wrought a million years  
To make it mine a day.  
This lily by the pasture bars,  
Beneath the walnut tree,  
Long ere the fire-mists formed in stars  
Was on its way to me.

Only they are yours for all time. God had been directing all those thousands of people in their preparations for you. I ought to say millions instead of thousands. You have suddenly come into the possession of the most precious estate any one ever did inherit this side of the glory land. I am not saying the people are perfect or

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that the treasures are unmingled with impurities. But they were made ready for you; there they are, and they are yours.

### **5. Treasures of Work**

Work has been accumulating for them and for you. Here are some duties:

(1) *Appreciate those treasures and their producers.* Realize your indebtedness to those who came before you into the church, those of the distant as well as the nearer past.

(2) *Appropriate them.* That's what they are for. It would be a sin not to do so. Yet those treasures are to be used not in the spirit of a slave or of a dolt but with discretion.

(3) *Be a producer of virtue and of all the spiritual values you have found* in the church. Otherwise you are only a consumer, not a producing member of the church—an unnatural person.

(4) *Transmit them* to the next to come in and see that others fall heir to them as you have done. Otherwise there is a break in the chain of production, and you go down in history as a parasite, inheriting and not bequeathing, receiving and not bestowing, consuming and not producing.

## V

### THE BAPTIST DISTINCTIVE

Is there a Baptist Distinctive, one definite thing that makes one a Baptist—without which one is not a Baptist even though a member of a Baptist church—with which one is a Baptist in theory even though not a member of a Baptist church and a Baptist in practise when trying to live up to it?

There is such a Distinctive.

What is it?

#### 1. What It Is Not

One person, knowing that we practise immersion and neither sprinkling nor pouring, says, "Immersion is your distinctive." My reply is that there are other denominations which practise immersion alone, the Greek Church, for instance, which is the present State Church of Greece and was formerly the State Church of Russia. Our distinctive is something that lies back of immersion and requires it.

Another, seeing that we never baptize infants, says, "Adult baptism must be your distinctive." That is a double mistake. We never use the term "adult baptism," for an adult is a grown person, and a child reaches the age when he may intelligently accept Christ and obey him in his ordi-

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nance of baptism long before he is grown. No child ought to postpone the acceptance of Christ as his Saviour and obedience to him in baptism until he is an adult. I have baptized many boys and girls of twelve, many also of ten, some of nine, a few of eight, and once I baptized a little girl of seven, who was just as competent to accept Jesus and be baptized as if she were seventy. No, we do not say "adult," but "believer's baptism." Even that is not our distinctive, but the distinctive lies back of believer's baptism and requires it.

Still others, without much thought, may suppose it is our independent, congregational form of church government. No, some other denominations have that form of government who are not Baptists. Our distinctive lies back of that and requires it.

### **2. What It Is**

When we find it, it must not be out of harmony with the human distinctive, for that would bring perpetual conflict. And what is the human distinctive? It is personality, and the distinctive of personality is consciousness, with power of choice and self-direction.

Nor may our distinctive be out of harmony with the divine distinctive. What is that? Exactly the same as the human: personality with consciousness, choice, self-direction. In Him it is perfect; in us imperfect. When God made man in his own image, that image was personality

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which shows itself in consciousness, choice, self-direction. Our distinctive must not antagonize the distinctive of God or of man.

This is what it is: *Any person who ever lived or ever could live, has as much inherent right to deal personally with God as any other person who ever did or ever could live.* That is to say, there is something in the human soul, something in God, something in our relations to each other and to God, which makes it just as right for one person to have dealings with God as for any other person.

That distinctive has a *fourfold support*:

(1) In the fact that all men were made in the one image, not part of the human family in that image and part in another, but all in that image and therefore all with equal rights.

(2) In the universal human instinct of freedom. There never was a person born into the world who did not feel that he had as much right to be free as any one else, though we may find some in whom that instinct has been assassinated or asphyxiated, and who are perverted types of human beings.

(3) In the Christian instinct of fraternity which is found in all real Christians. In being born again we get a new type of love, as Paul says, "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." There is a love growing out of every relationship; and toward all other followers of Christ every real Christian has the feeling of a brother and an equal before God.

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(4) In the definite word of Jesus when he said, "Call no man master on earth, for one is your master, even Christ," and again he says, "All ye are brethren."

The correlative of that distinctive is the obligation of all to have personal dealings with God, an obligation, however, which no other human being, but only God, can enforce. And he has made perfect arrangements to do so through Jesus Christ, in whom he has stored all authority; and he has made it all known in the story of Christ which we call the Bible, so that we can say with our Baptist fathers, "The Bible is our sole rule of faith and practise."

Such is our distinctive. No man nor group of men can stand between any soul and God and say to that soul: "Unless you pass through my hands you cannot have any dealings with God, cannot be saved; unless you accept my instructions and submit to my demands, God will not have anything to do with you." We say that only God can rule the soul, that he does so in Christ, and that he gives us adequate instructions about him and about all our duties in the Bible.

### **3. Interferences With Its Working**

Grounded in the nature of man and the nature of God, with support in the human instinct of freedom and in the Christian instinct of fraternity, and recognized and commanded directly by Jesus our Master, how could it ever be overthrown or even overlooked?

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It must be remembered that there are other elements in human nature. On the one hand, there are weaknesses of many kinds, such as fear, ignorance, superstition, and what the psychologists call the "inferiority complex." On the other hand we find vanity, pride of possession, passion for power and rulership, and the superiority complex. As a result the strong have domineered over the weak and made use of them; habits have been formed, traditions set in action, and institutions developed which have made it the interest of the strong to interfere with the working of that distinctive and impossible for the weak to maintain and assert their faith in their inherent rights.

*The way it all came about* opens one of the most tragical chapters in human history.

The first converts to the Christian faith were Jews, but soon Gentile converts began to come in. They came out of religions that were full of superstition. Two of those superstitions were that of the magical power of ceremonies and that of the magical power of a sacred order, a priesthood.

It was hard to throw off those superstitions. They clung to some of the converts who, when they saw the ceremony called baptism and the one called the Holy Supper, thought there must be magic in them. They talked about it; the idea spread. Soon they connected salvation with the ordinance of baptism; at length they said it was not only essential to salvation but was ac-

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tually salvation itself, a “regenerating bath.” In other words, a man stood between his fellow men and God and told them they could not reach God except through him; they must pass through his hands and be manipulated by him with the ordinance of baptism, else God would not save them, but would send them to hell.

That is *the first interference* with our distinctive which history reveals. By the end of the first century that idea was at work and at the time of Tertullian, who was active from about A. D. 190 to 220, it was generally held. He wrote, “Is it not wonderful that death should be washed away by bathing?” and again, “Water alone—always a perfect, gladsome, simple, material substance, pure in itself—supplied a worthy vehicle for God”; and, “Water was the first to produce that which had life, that it might be no wonder if in baptism water knew how to give life”; also, “The nature of the water, sanctified by the Holy One, itself conceived withal the power of sanctifying,” and “All waters, therefore, in virtue of the pristine privilege of their origin, do, after invocation of God, attain the sacramental power of sanctification; for the Spirit immediately supervenes from the heavens and rests over the waters, sanctifying them from himself; and, being thus sanctified, they imbibe at the same time the power of sanctifying.” In other words, a man got in between the soul and God and told him that, even though he had repented, he could not be saved unless he, the minister or

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priest, brought about his salvation with the ceremony of baptism.

That defeated the very purpose of Jesus in giving baptism. He gave it as a symbol of death and resurrection, as Paul tells us in Romans 6 : 3-6: "We are buried with him by baptism into death, that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life: for, if we have been in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection."

In being baptized one is preaching the gospel in a living tableau, saying, "This is a picture of what saves me, namely, the death of Christ for my sins and his resurrection for my justification." One is also telling one's Christian experience, saying, "This is a picture of the way it saved me, by my dying to sin and rising to a new life." One is also proclaiming one's hope of resurrection, saying in symbol, "This is a picture of what my body shall experience when it is raised from the grave."

But Christ's purpose was defeated when they made baptism a saving rather than a symbolical ordinance. Baptism is gone, even though the form might remain.

Evil results followed from which the Christian world is suffering even today. An almost inevitable change in the ordinance of baptism took place. A man was dying. He had repented of his sins and was trusting in Christ for salvation, but he could not be baptized. They were in a

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dilemma. If he died without baptism, he would go to hell; if they attempted to baptize him, it would kill him and send him to hell so much quicker. Instead of telling the poor fellow that baptism had nothing on earth to do with his salvation and that faith in a living and loving and mighty Saviour was the only requirement, they told him there was no hope for him at all. And they were actually honest about it. How they could think God was such a being is beyond me. A God who would not listen to the cry of such a penitent and would send him to hell for want of manipulation by some one with a material ceremony, even so sacred and beautiful a ceremony as baptism, is a God whom every free and rational soul would have to despise.

But there is usually a way out of every difficulty, whether a right or a wrong way, and it is not surprising that finally one man tapped his dome of thought and said, with unspeakable relief: "I have it. Let's pour water all over him and make it look as much like baptism as possible, and perhaps the church will accept it, not as the real thing, but as a substitute allowable in the circumstances."

It was accepted reluctantly and under protest. But the next time it was easier, and from pouring water all over a person to pouring it on his forehead, and finally sprinkling it on him was a perfectly easy and natural transition. The sprinkling and pouring were not regarded as baptism but as permissible substitutes, and thus we

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have the two substitutes based on the superstition that baptism is a saving rather than a symbolical ordinance.

No one claimed that they were the real baptism. They knew the meaning of the three Greek words—*baptizo*, to immerse, *rhantizo*, to sprinkle, and *echeo*, to pour. We transfer the word *baptizo* into our language, and call it “baptize,” and the noun *baptisma* we call baptism. If we had translated it we should have said “immerse” and “immersion.” They never thought of translating the word by “sprinkling” or “pouring” any more than the word *rhantizo* by the word “immerse” or “pour,” or the word *echeo* by “sprinkle” or “immerse.” It was generations after that, when the two substitutes gained a vogue of their own, that those who practised them sought to find support for them in the Bible, and even today some are trying to do so. No scholar now claims that the word transferred into our language and called “baptize” means anything more than “immerse,” nor does any historian claim that sprinkling and pouring are anything but man-made substitutes based on the idea of baptismal salvation. Every time one of the substitutes is used it is a proclamation of the superstition out of which it arose.

All the scholars affirm that Jesus and his disciples used the word which means immerse and never used the well-known words which mean sprinkle and pour. (See especially Liddell and Scott's and Thayer's New Testament lexicons.)

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The great classical writers, both Greek and Latin, agree with them. The Greek Fathers, from Barnabas, A. D. 117, to Basil, A. D. 330, know only immersion. The Latin Fathers from Tertullian, A. D. 150, to Alcuin, A. D. 735, agree with them. All the councils of the Roman church, from the Council of Nice, A. D. 325, to the Council of Nismes, A. D. 1284, decreed immersion and only allowed sprinkling and pouring when immersion was not possible. The church liturgies and rituals, Gothic, Syrian, Italian, French, English, prescribe immersion, in accordance with which, as Dean Stanley asserts, "Edward VI and Elizabeth were both immersed." The Greek church, in Greece and Russia, which ought to know the meaning of Greek words, practises only immersion. Catholic writers like Cardinal Gibbons, and Episcopal writers like Wall, Dean Stanley, Ellicott, Geike, Canon Liddon, Dean Alford, Ederheim, Bishop Cleveland Cox, Canon Farrar; and Presbyterian writers like Calvin, Beza, Zwingli, Turretin, Baxter, George Campbell, Philip Schaff, Trumbull; and Methodists like Wesley, Adam Clarke, C. W. Bennett, J. F. Hunt; the great Lutherans, like Martin Luther, Meyer, Harnack, and others say immersion is the meaning of the word baptism, and was the practise of the early centuries. The great commentators, like Meyer, Godet, Ellicott, Lightfoot, Olshausen, Plumptree, and others, too numerous to name, testify to the same thing. So do writers on the life of Christ and the life of Paul, like Geike, Stalker, Eder-

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sheim, Conybeare and Howson. A few words from Dean Stanley, of the Church of England, will sum up the testimony of hundreds of Pedobaptist scholars:

For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practise of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and which is the very meaning of the word baptize, that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into the water.

And again:

There can be no question that the original form of baptism—the very meaning of the word—was complete immersion in the deep baptismal waters, and that for the first four centuries any other form was either unknown, or regarded, unless in the case of dangerous illness, as an exceptional, almost a monstrous case. The change from immersion to sprinkling has set aside the larger part of the apostolic language regarding baptism, and has altered the very meaning of the word.

The two substitutes were bitterly opposed except in cases of critical sickness, but by the time of the Catholic Council of Ravenna, 1311, they had won their way and were officially pronounced real baptism by the church on the ground that the church had the right to change the form of baptism. But every time one of the substitutes is used it is a proclamation of the superstition out of which it arose.

*A second interference* with our distinctive came as a matter of course. If no one can be saved without baptism, then infants dying unbaptized

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will go to hell. It will not do to let God send the innocent things to hell, so they administered baptism to them—something done to the child without his knowledge or consent rather than something done by the child out of loving loyalty to Christ when he can accept him as Saviour and Master and obey him from choice.

At first, they baptized only children who were in immediate danger of death. Later they concluded that baptism was necessary in order to cleanse out hereditary sin. Still later, they came to believe that mortal sins committed after baptism could never be forgiven, so they waited until they thought the child was strong enough to guard himself against mortal sins before they baptized him. But by the middle of the third century they had developed their theology so as to admit that those who had lapsed into mortal sin after baptism might be restored and, from that time, the practise of infant baptism has been very prevalent. It was all done to save the child from hell in case he died in infancy. What a strange and repulsive God they made of our loving heavenly Father. Infant baptism constituted the second interference with the working of our distinctive.

*A third interference* was developing. One of the superstitions which some of the converts from the Gentile religions brought with them was that of the magical power of a priesthood. Power began to become localized in the officers of the church and those officers became graded. If one

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person has as much inherent right as another to deal personally with God, then one group has as much right as another group, without overhead control from any man or set of men; but that was changed and a hierarchy grew up with *power centered in bishops and archbishops*, and, the perversion became complete, it all *headed up in the pope of Rome*. I cannot do better than quote from Dr. A. H. Newman in his "History of Anti-Pedobaptism:

Other perversions of Christianity during the early centuries are so universally recognized by historians and so familiar to all readers of church history, that they need only be barely mentioned here. Sacerdotalism, a constant factor in pagan religious systems, soon intruded itself into the Christian church. The ordinances, having become mysteries, must be administered by a ceremonially qualified priesthood; and, as the services became elaborate and each function must be performed by a properly qualified functionary, clerical gradations came to be multiplied and accurately differentiated. Out of the simple polity of the apostolic time, in accordance with which each congregation chose its own bishops or presbyters and deacons for the direction of the spiritual work of the body, the administration of discipline and the collection and distribution of charities, there was developed, under the influences of the time, a system of presidential administration in which the chief elder (or bishop) directed the affairs of the local church with the assistance and advice of a board of presbyters. As the responsible head of the church he soon came to have chief control of the finances, and such control tended to increase his relative importance. As Christian work spread from older centers the newly established congregations were kept in relations of dependence on the mother church, or, rather, as integral

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parts thereof. Thus the pastor of the central church would have the supervision of a greater or smaller number of outside congregations, over each of which a presbyter of the central church came to preside. Thus arose diocesan episcopacy. At first this arrangement was adopted without any ambitious intentions on the part of the pastors as seemingly the most effective way of conducting Christian work. But, as the dependent congregations became conscious of strength and their presbyter-pastors became restless under episcopal control, which in some cases was no doubt arbitrarily exercised, friction arose between bishops and presbyters. By that time (about the middle of the third century—the case of Cyprian and the Carthaginian presbyters is in point) the sacerdotal idea was pretty fully developed. Cyprian and those who were like-minded believed that ecclesiastical unity was absolutely essential and that schism was one of the greatest of evils. They went so far as to maintain that outside of the one ecclesiastical organization, whose center of unity was found in the episcopate, there is no salvation. By the strong opposition that the presbyters made to the assumption of authority on the part of the bishops the latter were led to assert the divine right and the irresponsibility of bishops. The same sense of the necessity of organic union and unity of administration afterward led to the centralization of authority in metropolitans and finally in the papacy.

To quote further from Doctor Newman:

No less destructive of the spirit of primitive Christianity was the early intrusion of the doctrine of the meritoriousness of external works. Jews and pagans alike attached great merit to almsgiving, fasting, and the frequent utterance of fixed forms of prayer. By the middle of the third century leading churchmen like Cyprian did not hesitate to teach that almsgiving is a means of securing the remission of sins and of purchasing an eternal inheritance.

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Asceticism also was imported into early Christianity from paganism. This disposition to regard the body as intrinsically evil and all natural impulses as worthy only of being trampled upon is a common feature of pagan religions. Fanatical seeking for martyrdom, excessive fasting, and the exaltation of virginity were the earliest forms of Christian asceticism. It culminated in the brutalities of hermit life.

Superstition and idolatry were universally prevalent in ancient paganism as they are in modern. They pervaded and corrupted every department of life and occupied a most prominent place in the popular consciousness. In proportion as Christianity increased in popular influence and enjoyed immunity from persecution was the accession to the church of unchristianized or imperfectly Christianized life. Not only did the ordinances assume a pagan hue and sacerdotal and ascetic ideas become prevalent, but idolatrous practises corresponding in almost every detail with those of the surrounding heathenism came to be openly indulged in and regarded as Christian. The exaltation of saints and martyrs, the worship of images of Christ and the saints, the veneration of bones and other relics of the worthies of the past, pilgrimages to shrines and other holy places, vigils at the tombs of saints, the invocation of Mary the mother of Jesus as "the mother of God," the invocation of saints, belief in the efficacy of relics and shrines to cure diseases—these and many like superstitious practises were countenanced by some of the ablest and holiest of the Christian leaders of the fourth and following centuries and, by the fifth century, had become well-nigh universal.

Thus we see that two forces were at work changing the church, one from the inside, another from without. People came into the church to be saved, not because they were saved. They reversed the essential order by trying to get to

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Christ through the church instead of getting into the church through Christ. The church filled up with people who were not Christians at all and they brought their paganism with them. The church of the apostles was gone and a semi-heathen organization had now been developed in its place.

*A fourth interference* came along with the development of the power of this tremendous organization, and that was *the union of Church and State*. The Roman Emperors were shrewd rulers and showed a masterful skill in controlling the nations which they conquered. Their method was to Romanize them as thoroughly as possible. They knew the value of religion and its sanctions in controlling their subjects. Constantine was converted before his death, and his successor, Theodosius, who felt the need of this rising religion in his business of ruling, adopted it, uniting Church and State in one of the most unholy unions that ever disgraced humanity. For a State Church is a twofold monstrosity—a perversion of the function of government and an assault on the most distinctive thing in human nature, namely, the power of choice. Through the centuries many thousands were made martyrs through the operation of that inhuman infamy which for so long occupied the seat of power, successfully maintaining itself against protest and challenge and denunciation.

From that day till the year 1638 there was not a country on the face of the earth where the

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Christian religion prevailed but Church and State were united in compelling the people to support the Church and in suppressing any effort of anybody to exercise his God-given right of dealing with God personally as he and the Spirit of God might order.

*A fifth interference was in taking the Bible away from the people as a dangerous book and making the church superior to it.* The officials knew that if the people read the Bible they would revolt against their unbiblical, unchristian, and inhuman assumption of the authority that belongs to God alone, so they said to the people, "You cannot understand it, besides you have not time to read it; we will read it and tell you all you need to know."

So here are the five interferences with the working of our distinctive in their historical sequence: Putting one man between other men and God and requiring them to pass through his hands and be manipulated with the beautiful ordinance of baptism; secondly, administering baptism to infants instead of allowing them to obey Christ for themselves when they are old enough to accept him; thirdly, by destroying the independence of groups of individuals called churches and developing a graded official life in which was centered all authority over the local churches; fourthly, the unholy union of Church and State; fifthly, denying the Bible to the laity and making it second in authority to the officials who constituted the Church.

### 4. The Age-long Effort for the Recovery of the Distinctive

Three things are necessary for its recovery.

(1) *The Idea Itself.* That cannot be permanently lost as long as there are human beings with the instinct of freedom to assert itself sooner or later, with the Christian instinct of fraternity to demand for others what it claims for itself, with the great fact of the one single image of God which is in any one person as truly as in any other, and with the words of Jesus forever ringing in the ears of Christian people, "Call no man master on earth, for one is your Master, even Christ." The idea persists.

(2) But there must be *advocates of that idea.* When people joined the church in order to become Christians it is fair to say they did not become Christians, except in limited numbers, for that is not the way to become Christians, and those actually did become so in spite of the wrong way. Among those who were actual Christians and not simply church-members, most of them would get hold of the idea and some of them would have the courage to speak out. Of course they suffered more than ostracism. It meant persecution and often death.

They propagated the idea in two ways. One way was by agitation. They did it not for themselves alone, but for those who would deny them their rights. Some of them were radical and "one-ideaed," as we sometimes say. Of course

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they were. Some did not have the idea whole, but they had hold of it. They were wise enough not to agitate for civil liberty, but only for their religious rights. Some were far-sighted enough to know that civil liberty would finally come as a result, as a sort of by-product, we might say. They knew that, if they once got the rulers to recognize the rights of conscience, civil liberty would become a fact, whatever the outward form of government. They knew that if they advocated a form of government corresponding to the form of church polity which they held, they would lose both battles, so they kept to the main issue, knowing that, when hearts were changed and charged with fraternal love, right personal and political relations would come mainly by vital processes. They were right.

The other way was by illuminating with their personal lives as free men in Christ Jesus and with their group life.

(3) A *place* where that idea would be allowed to grow and work itself out was essential. We have to remember that, wherever Christianity prevailed in the whole world, it was a state religion and used the arm of the law to prevent freedom of worship, taxing all for the support of itself, fining and imprisoning and torturing and murdering those who dared to try to worship God as their own consciences and the Bible directed. That was the case almost everywhere, and those agitators were driven on from place to place and from country to country.

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They lived in Italy, Switzerland (called Helvetia), France, Germany, Spain, the British Isles, Bohemia, Holland. That is, they tried to live in those places. Whether it meant death or not, they advocated that undying truth and suffered. "During the fourth and fifth centuries," to quote again from Doctor Newman,

British Christians seem to have held aloof in a measure from the paganizing influences in which the continental church became involved. Diocesan Episcopacy seems not to have existed. The study of the Scriptures was pursued with zeal in the numerous semi-monastic colleges for the training of pastors and missionaries. An extensive and successful missionary work was carried on in Ireland, Scotland, France, and Germany. Human authority in matters of religion was indignantly repudiated. Humility and simplicity in Christian life were insisted upon, and the pomp and worldliness of the Roman missionaries, who sought to convert them, proved highly offensive. An example of their missionary activity is the work of Patrick (A. D. 432 onward) who evangelized more or less thoroughly the whole of Ireland and left a reputation for sanctity of life and spiritual power that entitles him to be considered one of the greatest of missionaries.

Another Irish Christian was Columba, who, in the sixth century, planted evangelical churches throughout Scotland. Still another Irishman was Columbanus, who, with thirteen companions, established missions in Burgundy, Switzerland, and Northern Italy. The work inaugurated by him was carried into the Rhine Valley, Thuringia, Bavaria, and Southeastern Germany. Ebrard writes that there existed "a flourishing, well-or-

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ganized, Rome-free church whose only supreme authority was the holy Scriptures, whose preaching was the word of the free, redeeming grace of God."

The same writer goes on :

A simple, but well-organized church existed from the Pyrenees to the Scheldt, from Chur to Utrecht, whose only crime was that it did not recognize the Roman Church as its supreme head; hence also knew no new invocation of saints, no mass, no auricular confession and the like and did not do homage to gross Pelagianism but preached justification through faith.

Forster describes that church as "recognizing the Scriptures as its completely sufficient norm."

Doctor Newman further says :

Notwithstanding the terrible persecutions to which they were subjected during the seventh and following centuries by the Saxon kings at the instigation of the Roman Church, Christians of the ancient British type are known to have maintained their existence in considerable numbers, especially in Wales and Scotland, until the eleventh century. It is probable that they were never completely destroyed and that they reappeared in the Lollards of the fourteenth century.

These and other bodies of people had hold of the distinctive, though not always in its wholeness; they released it and sent it on its way down the centuries.

From the twelfth century on its advocates became more constant, more coherent. About the year 1173 Peter Waldo, a wealthy man of Lyons, France, gave up his property and devoted him-

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self to preaching the gospel. He and his followers established churches in France, Italy, Bohemia, Southern Germany, and the southwestern provinces of Austria.

There were sects called Taborites and Bohemian Brethren and Moravians and Pickards, who held the distinctive more or less whole. Peter Chelcicky of Bohemia, the spiritual father of the Bohemian Brethren, carried the doctrine of personal liberty farther than most others had done.

These bodies of Christians, who opposed the union of Church and State on principle and not simply in order to gain their own rights, were the thinkers who brought on the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Usually they were called "nicknames" by their enemies, from the names of prominent leaders or the locations where they carried on, or names indicating some peculiarity.

Many groups of them came to be called "Rebaptizers." You readily see why. When a person was converted through their agency and was told of the requirement to follow Jesus in his ordinance of baptism, but was informed he had been baptized in infancy, his reply was that it was something done to him and not by him, and he must be baptized for himself. So their enemies called the group by the Greek word "Anabaptists," which means "Rebaptizers."

These were the agitators who prepared the way for Martin Luther, and they won his assent to the fact of immersion as baptism and to the wrongness of both infant baptism and the union

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of Church and State. But Luther had come straight out of the heart of the Roman Church, and his theology had much of Rome in it. Besides, he was an autocrat by nature and by the discipline of a church in which there were but two classes, the ruling and the ruled classes, the one above him that ruled him and the one below whom he and his fellow priests were to rule.

These Anabaptists were the real thinkers of the Reformation. When Luther came from the Wartburg to Wittenburg and found that three Anabaptists, Nicolas Storch, Max Stübner, and Thomas Munzer, had captured the intellects of Cellarius and Carlstadt and even of Melancthon, he was filled with rage and drove them off, saying to Stübner, "God punish you, Satan." That swing from the clear thinking of the Anabaptists to which he had really assented, drove him to accept infant baptism as a means of perpetuating his church, for he was afraid to trust the gospel alone, and it led him to retain connection with the state in order that he might not lose the support of which he felt such great need. While he said again and again that immersion alone was baptism, he retained the two substitutes. He retained the doctrine of Rome as to the Lord's Supper as a sacrament and not a symbol. Had he accepted the distinctive whole and lived it there would have been no State Church in the part of Germany which he influenced and the place in which the idea could be domesticated and thence transplanted would have been secured therein.

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*A new country must be found* for it. God had that country awaiting the eye and the foot of man. He utilized the man best fitted of all the men then living to find it and make it known. That man knew nothing at all about the distinctive, nor about the purpose of God in directing him to this land. He was like other Catholics, and the thought of religious liberty had never penetrated his mind. He had reached the conclusion that the earth is round, and he had dreams of finding India and China by this route and enjoying all the luxuries of the Orient. He had the traits for the adventure. When he had discovered the land and made it known, his providential task was done.

The rulership of the land must not be entrusted to those who could not plant that idea here. The Latin races, with many admirable characteristics, were all Roman Catholic, and they had not the least conception of liberty of conscience. Although the Baptists of England had been persecuted by their own countrymen, they belonged to the one race which at that time was most capable of being the guardian of the idea, the Anglo-Saxon. God was directing.

There were *three types* of people who came here from England at an early date, besides smaller groups from Holland and Sweden and France and other lands.

First were the early settlers of Virginia. They were State Church people, members of the Established Church. They were the *Cavaliers*,

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worldly and strangers to the idea of religious liberty. They taxed all the people to support their church and later, when our Baptist fathers claimed the right to worship God as they were taught in his Word, they fined them and whipped them, and put them in prison. They punished those who committed the crime of preaching the gospel of Christ. James Madison, who had talked with many Baptists of the principle of religious liberty, wrote to a friend in Philadelphia,

that diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some, and to their eternal infamy the clergy can furnish their quota of imps for such purposes. There are at the present time, in the adjacent county, not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for proclaiming their religious sentiments, which are in the main quite orthodox.

That was in Virginia. God could not use that group to plant the idea here, for they did not have it.

A second group we call the *Puritans*. They settled in Boston and Salem and were called Puritans because they believed in a purer life than prevailed in the Church of England. They did not leave their church at first but came here with the hope of establishing a purer type of Christian life. They had no more idea of religious liberty than the people they left behind in England. They are the ones who hung witches and Quakers and whipped Baptists and felt that in so doing they were rendering distinguished and meritorious service to God. Some one said of them that they

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came here to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences and to make every body else do the same. They were just as intolerant of those who differed from them as were their less religious brethren down in Virginia. They were not Separatists when they came, though many of them did separate from the State Church after a while. They did not bring the distinctive, did not have it to bring.

A third group were the *Pilgrim Fathers* who landed at Plymouth Rock in December, 1620. They belonged to the Independents or Congregationalists who were known as Separatists in England, because they separated from the State Church, and also Independents because they believed in the independent form of church government. The term Puritan is sometimes applied to them in a general way. They demanded absolute religious liberty for themselves and were the best people religiously who had come to this country, but did not have that distinctive, for they united State and Church in an indissoluble pact, taxed people of all faiths to support their church, enforced their claims on all regardless of their conscientious convictions, and required that a person be a member of the church before he could vote. In Connecticut, as late as 1833, the State taxed the people as a whole, regardless of church connections, to support the Church, and they did the same in Massachusetts as late as 1834.

I select several instances from Nathaniel Morton's "Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers," show-

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ing the spirit of the colonies both at Salem and Plymouth. At Salem two non-conformist ministers, named Skelton and Higginson, came over from England and were ordained August 6, 1629. Mr. Higginson was instructed to draw up a confession of faith and a covenant, and from it I quote the following with a shudder:

And because they foresaw that this wilderness might be looked upon as a place of liberty and therefore might in time be troubled with erroneous spirits, therefore they did put in one article into the confession of faith, on purpose, about the duty and power of the *magistrate* in matters of religion.

In other words, they intended to be in a position to use the civil officers in dealing with any one who should even express, much less act upon, the conviction that America was a land of religious liberty. That was in Salem where we have learned to expect such things. The same year there came two brothers named Brown, one a lawyer, the other a merchant, who insisted on holding public services and using the Church of England services from the Book of Common Prayer. But the governor and council passed on the matter and "the governor told them that New England was no place for such as they, and therefore he sent them back to England at the return of the ship the same year;" in other words, sent them back in the same ship that brought them.

Another instance seems laughable today. On August 7, 1667, Rev. John Wilson, pastor of the church in Boston, was on his death-bed and was

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asked by those who thought his judgment would have special value as he saw the world recede from him "what he conceived to be those sins amongst us which provoked the displeasure of God against the country." His reply was that he had often thought the three sins were Separation, Anabaptism, and Korahism. The first he did not explain, but probably he meant separation from the Church of England. By Anabaptism he said he meant "for our neglect of baptizing the children of the church I think God is provoked by it." By Korahism he meant that the people would rise up and contradict their ministers and teachers.

The above three groups utterly failed to bring the distinctive. Some one must bring it, if God's purpose was not to be thwarted. There was only one group that had it whole and there was not one of them among the Cavaliers or the Puritans or the Pilgrims.

But wait. God is at work. It will come in an unexpected way.

A new minister came to Boston. He was of Welsh extraction and had been brought up in the Established Church, but he had been listening to those Anabaptists, by this time called Baptists. He had begun to imbibe their great idea, but had not yet separated himself from the church of his childhood. When he came to Boston the people thought they had captured the very best preacher anywhere. But he began to release that idea in his sermons and then they revised their original

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valuation of him. He was hardly as good a preacher as they at first thought, for he hinted that the police court of Boston had no right to determine the conduct of church services or the sermons of the ministers. That was shocking.

Presently he went up to Salem, where the big idea came out stronger, and that made life still more uncomfortable for him. Then he tried Plymouth and was rebuked for that sort of preaching. He went back to Salem, where he became still more pronounced. He found that the Puritans of Salem and Boston were just as intolerant as was Archbishop Laud of England. He saw that the union of Church and State was unbiblical and unnatural, a perversion of the function of government, and an assault on the most distinctive thing in human nature, the power and right of choice. At first his revolt against both the Puritan and Pilgrim churches was not so much against their doctrines as against their principle of a State Church with its essential denial of the right of thought and choice and self-direction for every man.

His banishment from Salem was decided upon by the court of "prudent magistrates" in Boston, the charge against him being that he taught "that the magistrate ought not to punish the breach of the first table otherwise than in such case as did disturb the civil peace." The "first table" meant religious worship.

The decree of banishment continues, "Whereas Mr. Roger Williams, one of the elders of the

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church of Salem, hath broached and divulged new and dangerous opinions against the authority of magistrates," as Morton says, "a disturber of the peace both of the church and commonwealth."

So this man was banished because he believed and taught that no Church, or Church and State combined, had the right to control a person in his relations to and his dealings with his God.

Then that man decided to do a thing that proved to be the greatest deed since the days of the apostles, the one thing for which the groaning centuries had been waiting, for which humanity, whether consciously or unconsciously, had been longing, toward which God had been working for ages. After walking southward through the deep snows, accompanied by a little group of brave souls who felt the power of that newly discovered distinctive, he bought a piece of land from the Indians near Narragansett Bay, wrote a constitution for the government of the people who should live there, and put into that constitution a clause that had never before in the history of the world been written into any constitution for the government of any people, and that clause said that everybody should have the right under that government to worship God according to his own judgment, whether he was pagan, or Jew, or Christian of any denomination, or member of no church. They called that place which he had thus preempted in the name of liberty by the gracious name of "Providence." They organized the first Baptist church of that city and of the

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nation. He and the original settlers entered into a glorious compact which read thus :

We whose names are hereunder written, being desirous to inhabit in the town of Providence, do promise to submit ourselves in *active and passive obedience to all such orders or agencies* as shall be made for the public good of the body in an orderly way by the major consent of the present inhabitants, masters of families, incorporated into a township, and of such others whom they shall admit into the same, *only in civil things*.

That was in March, 1638. The substance of the contract was reaffirmed in another document signed in 1640. The same principles were embodied in the code of laws adopted by the colony in 1647 and finally incorporated in the Royal Charter given by Charles II in 1663 :

Our Royal will and pleasure is that no person within the said colony at any time hereafter shall be in any way molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any differences of opinion in matters of religion and do not actually disturb the civil peace of the said colony.

Thus, for the first time in the history of humanity, a state laid its corner-stone in the basic principle of equal liberty for all. There had been at times some toleration in European countries for people holding different views from those of the State Church, but toleration and liberty are two distinct and essentially conflicting things.

When a memorial to Roger Williams was placed in the national capitol in 1872, Senator Anthony said :

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Roger Williams did not merely lay the foundations of religious freedom; he constructed the whole edifice, in all its impregnable strength and in all its imperishable beauty. Religious freedom, which now, by general consent, underlies the foundation principles of civilized government, was, at that time, looked upon as a wilder theory than any proposition, moral, political, or religious, that has since engaged the serious attention of mankind. It was regarded as impracticable, disorganizing, impious, and if not utterly subversive of social order, it was not so, only because its manifest absurdity would prevent any serious effort to enforce it.

There was one early instance of toleration in this country that has been sometimes claimed as religious liberty, but that is very far from the truth. I read in the speech of a prominent man who was a candidate for an eminent office that the first instance of religious liberty in our country was in Maryland and in the Bill of Toleration granted by Lord Baltimore, a Catholic, who founded that province.

The claim is correct except in four particulars: (1) As to the time. That Bill of Toleration was adopted in 1649 while Roger Williams wrote his document in 1638, eleven years earlier. (2) As to liberty. Lord Baltimore granted toleration, not liberty. He bestowed it, but neither he nor any one else could bestow liberty. They could recognize it as an inalienable right which no man on earth could give. (3) Lord Baltimore did it under compulsion, Williams recognized it as each man's right. Lord Baltimore's people were Catholics but lived under a Protestant govern-

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ment, and would not have been allowed by that government to deny one of its Protestant provinces their right of worship. With Williams and his friends it was a matter of conviction that all men had that right, and he acted on the principle of eternal right. (4) Lord Baltimore belonged to a Church that had never in a single instance recognized that people had such a thing as the inborn right to liberty of worship. That church was the State Church in most of the nations of Europe till that union was broken in several countries, as Germany, England, Sweden, Holland, etc., and Catholic countries had never taken advantage of any one of their many opportunities to recognize that people could worship God as they thought best. The Catholic Church did not even grant that toleration in Maryland, but one of its members, under compulsion of England, gave toleration instead of liberty. It would have used Lord Baltimore to set up a State Church, prisons, thumbscrews, racks, and all, if it had been allowed, while Williams and his friends belonged to a church whose very nature compelled it to act as he did and whose history had been one prolonged effort to procure and secure religious liberty not for themselves alone but for all, even for those who, if they had had the power, would have denied it to them.

The Catholics could no more recognize the freedom of the soul than could Baptists deny it. It is of the nature and structure of their organization. To recognize it would be to destroy the whole

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system. They say that the Church, through its officials, can forgive sins, can deny salvation to any one, and has the right to rule the souls of all men as God's vice-gerent, vice-ruler. When the pope speaks "ex cathedra," he cannot make a mistake, because the Holy Spirit will not allow it, and the faithful must accept what he says as a deliverance from God. If they do not, they are not the faithful, but reprobates to be punished for not surrendering their divinely given right to deal personally with their God and Father.

Take a few quotations from Catholic authorities:

We do, on the part of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and also by the authority of the Blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own, excommunicate and curse all Hussites, Wicliffites, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists, Huguenots, Anabaptists, Trinitarians and Apostates from Christ, and all and Sundry other heretics, by whatsoever name they are reckoned, and of whatsoever sect they may be, and their receivers, aiders, and abettors and in general all their defenders whatsoever, and those who without our authority and that of the Apostolic See knowingly read or retain or print or in any way defend the books containing their heresy or treating of religion (*Extract from Bull in Coena Domini, by Pope Paul V*).

The above is published in Rome every year on Maundy Thursday.

The bishop takes this oath:

To the utmost of my power I will persecute and attack heretics, schismatics, and rebels against our lord (the Pope), and his aforesaid successors.

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Canons IX and X, Council of Trent, say,

If any one shall say that sacramental absolution by a priest is not a judicial act, but a mere ministry . . . even though the priest should not absolve seriously but in a joke, let him be accursed.

Extract from creed of Pope Pius IV:

I likewise admit the Holy Scriptures according to that sense which our Holy Mother, the Church, has held and does hold, whose province it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of Holy Scripture . . . Whatsoever is condemned by the Church I, in like manner, condemn, reject and anathematize.

To the same effect speak *Canones et Decreti Concilii Tridentini*, and the authoritative Catechism of Council of Trent, "Faith of Our Fathers," by Cardinal Gibbons, and scores of others.

To the above quotations I add a confirming word by the scintillating Papini, an Italian Catholic layman, who wrote a brilliant and erratic "Life of Christ" several years ago.

Protesting against the work of Protestants among the Italians he says:

Leave us under the tyranny of the Pope; it is a tyranny established by Christ, the tyranny of a father, and we prefer it infinitely to the tyranny of pastors, of quacks, of consistories, and of books. We "savages," we medievalists still hold to the bull *Unam Sanctam*, which says: "*We assert, declare, define, and pronounce that for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is absolutely necessary to salvation.*" We demand but little, only one thing: that you subscribe

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with us to the documents issued from the Vatican during the past seventy years, from the Syllabus of Pius X to the encyclical *Ubi arcano Dei* of Pius XI inclusive.

The spread of religious liberty to the other States and its final adoption into the Constitution of the United States is a story of thrilling heroism on the part of our Baptist fathers.

Several instances of the inhumanity with which they were treated by State Churches must be given in order to set forth the facts of history clearly. One is the case of Henry Dunstan, the first president of Harvard University. I quote from Dr. Henry C. Vedder's "A Short History of the Baptists," p. 197:

For preaching against infant baptism this learned, godly, and zealous man was indicted by the Grand Jury, condemned to suffer a public admonition, and placed under bonds for good behavior, finally being compelled to resign the presidency of the college of which he had been the greatest benefactor. Shortly afterward he was arraigned for refusing to have his child baptized but was saved from further persecution by his death.

Another instance was that of John Clarke, who founded the First Baptist Church of Newport, and Obadiah Holmes, and I quote again from Doctor Vedder:

While they were spending the Lord's Day with a brother who lived near Lynn it was concluded to have religious services in the house. Two constables broke in while Mr. Clarke was preaching from Revelation 3 : 10, and the men were haled before the court. For this offense they were sentenced to pay, Clarke a fine

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of twenty pounds and Holmes one of thirty pounds, in default of which they were to be "well whipped." A friend paid Clarke's fine and he was set at liberty, whether he would or not, but Holmes was "whipped unmercifully" (the phrase is Bancroft's) in the streets of Boston for the atrocious crime of preaching the gospel and of adding thereto the denial of infant baptism.

But just before the lash was laid upon Holmes he said to the bystanders, "Good people all, I am now about to be baptized with the baptism of affliction that so I may have fellowship with my Lord."

The way the great distinctive spread from Rhode Island into the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the several States, one by one, is a fascinating study. It should be noted that the Constitution of the United States, as originally adopted, did not forbid the union of Church and State, said nothing about it. Our Baptist forefathers knew there was danger lurking in that silence, but they supported George Washington and the other leaders who with very great difficulty secured its adoption by the thirteen States. But there was one thing in the Constitution which gave them hope. That was the method which the document provided for its own amendment. They said to each other, "We will adopt it and then amend it." So, at once, they won the aid of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and other men of balanced judgment in getting the First Amendment to the national Constitution passed. This brief but meaningful safeguard of religious liberty reads as follows:

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Congress shall make no law regarding the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

The States took it up, one by one later, and wrote the equivalent of it into their constitutions, Connecticut retaining the old régime of taxing all people for the support of the Congregational church till 1833, and Massachusetts till 1834.

At last *the distinctive had found a place* where it could be domesticated and grow, and whence it could spread into all the world, as it is doing now. Through all the centuries it had been at work on the Continent of Europe and in England, producing great epochs, making great men and women, and bringing on world movements whose significance can only now be clearly discerned.

We are glad that the agency of Baptists, under the providence of God, in securing soul liberty for mankind is universally and generously recognized by students of history and of the science of government.

Masson in his life of Milton wrote:

Not to the Church of England, nor to Scottish Presbyterians, nor to English Puritanism at large, does the honor of the first perception of the full principle of liberty of conscience and its first assertion in English speech belong. That honor has to be assigned, I believe, to the Independents generally and the Baptists in particular.

John Locke the philosopher says, "Baptists were the first and only promoters of absolute

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liberty—just and true liberty, equal and impartial.”

Stoughton, in his ecclesiastical history of England, says that to the Baptists “belongs the honor of presenting in this country the first distinct and broad plea for liberty of conscience.”

George Bancroft, in his “History of the United States,” writes, “Freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind, was, from the first, the trophy of the Baptists.”

In discussing the achievement of bringing about the complete separation of Church and State, Leonard Woolsey Bacon, a Congregationalist, says:

So far as this work was a work of intelligent conviction and religious faith, the chief honor of it must be given to the Baptists. Other sects, notably the Presbyterians, had been energetic and efficient in demanding their own liberties; the Friends and the Baptists agreed in demanding liberty of conscience and worship and equality before the law for all alike. But the active labor in this cause was mainly done by the Baptists. It is to their consistency and constancy in the warfare against the privileges of the powerful “Standing Order” of New England and of the moribund establishment of the South that we are chiefly indebted for the final triumph in this country of that principle of the separation of Church and State which is one of the largest contributions in the world to civilization and to the church universal.

From America that distinctive is spreading by normal processes to the other nations. State Churches will soon be a troubled memory of by-

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gone ages and all will wonder that people professing to be Christians could ever have consented to pervert government and violate the soul's functions in that way. Let us thank God that our denomination has been God's chosen agent in making that unspeakable gift to mankind, and then let us ask what is the next step we are appointed to take as the possessors and advocates of that invaluable distinctive.

## VI

### THE BAPTIST OBJECTIVE

Now what is our Objective, the goal toward which we have been traveling along the pathway of our distinctive?

It is simple, unmistakably clear, and inescapably imperative. That goal is nothing less than seeing the whole world in possession of that distinctive whole, not a part of the world in possession of it whole, nor the whole world in possession of it in part, but the whole world in possession of it whole.

#### 1. Why Pursue This Objective

There are *six reasons* why we must do it.

(1) That the distinctive exists, not as an interesting and valuable possession of a group, but as one of the necessities of human life. The whole world must have it whole because *the wholeness of the world* is impossible without it. Mankind was made for it, and it exists for mankind. Some one must give it to the whole race, and evidently the body of people who now have it whole and have had the responsibility of giving it its present vogue, is the very body of people to continue that task until it is done. If they do not, God will be under the necessity of raising up some other body to take the task from our

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faithless hands. How much of the world does not have it now? All who have not the gospel of Christ, and that means nearly a billion people. That is a wide and fascinating field for our endeavor. Even among those who have had the gospel, if there is a group that is a State Church elsewhere, they have not the idea whole; if there is any practising baptism as a means of salvation of old or young, they have it not; if any use the two substitutes which grew out of the superstition that baptism is essential to salvation, or if they baptize babies, or if they are under an overhead control instead of practising the original autonomy of the local church, they do not have it whole, even though they may have much of the very gospel itself. No, the world is not yet in possession of it by any means. And the integrity, the wholeness, of the world requires that we or some other body shall put it in possession of this distinctive.

(2) *The wholeness of the gospel* requires that we do that very thing. It is an integral part of the gospel. You cannot take out Christ's words, "Call no man master on earth, for one is your Master, even Christ," and leave the gospel whole. That also requires missions. We must be the most missionary body of people on earth. God seems to have made a special ruling that the gospel should go to the heathen nations with that essential in it, for did he not start modern missions through William Carey, who was the first to take the gospel to India's teeming millions?

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And did he not inaugurate foreign missions by Americans through Adoniram Judson who, though brought up in another faith, was led to accept the Baptist distinctive while reading his Bible on board the ship in which he was sailing to Burma, so that he had to change church affiliations at once and then arouse our people to organize a missionary society to support the work? Can we think of it in any other way than that God wanted the gospel with that integral idea in it at the start in India and Burma?

(3) *The wholeness of Jesus' purpose*, which is God's purpose, for mankind requires that they have this distinctive whole. As some one has analyzed it, his purpose for the world religiously is a world of worshipers and doers of the Father's will; politically, a world of equals; socially, a world of brothers; industrially, a world of co-laborers and comrades. That is impossible without our distinctive, by whomsoever it may be bestowed upon the world. The world situation at this very moment is calling mutely but insistently for that reign of Christ. The cure for the ills of our modern life is Christ, and Christ is impossible without the thing that he requires, namely, that people have him alone as Master and have each other as brothers—"all ye are brethren."

(4) *The wholeness of our commission* requires that we do so. A commission takes account of the things essential in it and the time required to perform it. We have procured and apparently secured certain rights for the world at large, in-

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cluding ourselves and those who at first were unwilling to grant us our rights, but the inclusive work is not yet done, and the time for which our commissions was given us is not all spent.

(5) *The wholeness of other Christian bodies* who are doing great, constructive work for the world demands that we bestow this distinctive on them. We have had discussions and controversies with them in order to win triumphs over them, but we must now approach them as brothers with something to bestow on them which we have found to have special value. We may tell them how much of a blessing it has all been to us, and that we wish them to have the benefit of it. Our purpose and spirit must be Christly. Those bodies that allow the ideas and ceremonies which came in with the several interferences with that distinctive, need it. It would add to their already great value to the world.

(6) But I now come to the very greatest of all the reasons for bestowing this distinctive in its wholeness upon the whole world, and that is that *the wholeness of Christianity* depends on it. When I speak of a whole Christianity I mean a united or a reunited Christendom. And by a reunited Christendom I mean that union of all the forces of Christianity in one great body for which we all pray and many hope.

There are several things necessary if we are ever to have church union.

First of all, we must recognize the fact that we now have Christian unity. All Christians are one

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in Christ by virtue of being in Christ and not by virtue of being in any one church or in a combined church. If you were born again in the heart of Africa and had never heard of any other Christian than the one who brought you to Christ, you would be one with all other Christians because you would sustain exactly the same essential relation to Christ and other Christians that you would sustain if you knew a very large number of them and were active in all the great enterprises of the kingdom of Christ.

There are three tremendous figures of speech which show Christ's relation to his disciples: He the vine and they the branches vitally connected with him and with each other; he the head, and they the body, all members not only of him but of each other; he the chief corner-stone, and they living stones laid down on him and all growing together and constituting the glorious temple of a redeemed humanity. As soon as any one is a Christian he automatically becomes a member of Christ and of the other Christians.

So Christian unity is a fact because there are Christians. Yet many people are saying that Christ's prayer to the Father that they may all be one is kept from being answered by the refusal of people to get into one great church, usually the church to which those particular people belong. There is unity now, for unity is of the spirit, union of the letter; unity is internal and vital, while union is external and more or less mechanical; unity is involuntary and a matter of

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the vital breath, while union is voluntary and a matter of arrangement. To be sure, union must be a matter of thought and of loyalty to Christ, but it is not Christian unity and can only come where there is real unity of spirit.

Secondly, we must recognize the fact that we now have much Christian and church cooperation. The Federation of Churches is often a useful thing. It enables churches to work together in general and special activities and to reenforce each other. It has rectified some of its earlier mistakes. Some of its workers used to feel called on to become propagandists for church union without regard to the autonomy of the groups working together. But it may serve a fine purpose. There are other forms of interdenominational fellowship and cooperation which are valuable. Let us thank God for them and keep on growing together.

Thirdly, there can be no church union on known departures from the teachings of our Guide-book. Go back and carefully note the five respects in which the great distinctive has been interfered with, and ask yourself the question, how one who recognizes all the facts of the case can deliberately go into a union which endorses those violations of the teachings of the Word and of the essential functions of human nature.

To be a bit more specific, here are several questions that must be settled by the coalescing bodies:

*The question of church polity* will have to be decided on. There are three general types of

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church government to be found. One is the prelatical. It is based chiefly on the office of bishop. In the New Testament there are three words which designate what we call the ministry, "bishop" "elder," and "pastor," though they indicate different phases of that multiform relationship. That the words bishop and elder were used of the same office is clear from Paul's letter to Titus (1 : 5-7) to appoint "elders in every city . . . if any man is blameless . . . for the bishop must be blameless as God's steward;" and in Peter's First Epistle, fifth chapter, in which he exhorts the elders and says he is their fellow elder and in effect calls them pastors, which means shepherds of the flock. The Greek word *episcopos*, translated "bishop," means overseer and refers to the executive work of the minister; the Greek word *presbuteros* means "elder" and refers to the advisory and instructive work of the minister; the word *poimen*, translated "pastor," means "shepherd," and refers to the personal care which the minister is to bestow on the people who are his flock. The three words support and complete each other and indicate the manifold nature of the minister's relationships and ministry. Doctor Lightfoot, of the Church of England, proves by careful interpretation of the Scriptures that the two words, bishop and elder, designated one and the same office in the New Testament.

By the prelatical type of church government I mean the *episcopal*. It is called prelatical, which

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is the Latin word for "preferred," because there was one preferred group, and that was the ministry, not in its wholeness as composed of bishop (overseer), elder, and shepherd, but in its single phase of overseership. That overhead control varies from the perfect autocracy of the Roman Catholic Church, in which the officers claim to speak and act as rulers in God's place, to the most democratic form of it in the Methodist Church, where the overhead control is at its lowest, though it is there.

Shall the united church have that form of organization? If so, we cannot retain our distinctive whole.

A second form of polity is the *presbyterial*, which is built upon the eldership and has far less of the overhead control than has the episcopal type. Shall the united church have that form of government? If so, our distinctive cannot be maintained whole.

The third form of government is the *congregational*, in which the authority resides entirely in the people composing the local group, not coming down from an overhead body but arising from the constituting body, a real democracy of soul. If one individual has as much inherent right to deal personally with God and direct his own life as any other individual, so one group has as much inherent right as any other group and cannot, in the nature of life itself, both natural and Christian, be under the control of any other group or set of men. That must be regarded as settled.

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The relation of the various groups to each other is that of voluntary cooperation in extending the kingdom of Christ over mankind. Does any "church union" involve the surrender of that basic and vital principle? Then we should lose our distinctive, and some one would have to recover and reestablish it.

A second question that will have to be settled in the united church is that of *the initial ceremony*. Shall it be baptism or the substitutes that owe their origin to the superstition that baptism is a saving rather than a symbolical ordinance, or shall it be all three? We could not interfere with the freedom of any group to use those substitutes if they so wish, but we cannot make use of them or endorse the use of them in the church to which we should belong. This position is not a matter of prejudice, but of principle. If we surrender, we do not surrender baptism but the distinctive that lies back of it and requires it.

A third question: Who shall be baptized and become members of the composite church, professed believers, or babes, or both? Even though we may not consider baptism as a means of saving the babies we shall not accept that interference with the working of our universal distinctive. Only one who has personally died to sin and risen to a new life can obey Christ in the ordinance which assumes and declares that. I once baptized a young man who was not converted at the time. Soon afterward he saw his mistake, accepted Christ and was baptized again. But the

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first time it was not the burial of a dead man, a man who had died to sin, nor was it the resurrection of a living man, but of one still dead in sin. No one who was immersed before becoming an actual Christian has been baptized in reality though he has been in form.

The propagation of this principle is an essential move in the direction of church union, an end most ardently desired by many people.

A fourth question must be faced, and that is *the question of the Lord's Supper*. There are several views of that wonderful memorial.

First is the view that the bread and wine are changed by the blessing of the minister into the actual, literal body and blood of Jesus. That view was developed by the Church of Rome and is called *transubstantiation*, meaning a change of substance. It is one of the reasons why the priest drinks the wine, for it would not do to lose a single drop of that precious blood, as might happen when passing it around among the people, while the people eat the bread. Shall the composite church accept that view? If they do, our distinctive is gone.

There is a second view called *consubstantiation*. Martin Luther invented this. He denied that the bread and wine were changed into the veritable, literal body and blood of Jesus, but affirmed his "real presence" there, "in, with, and under the bread and wine," and that it was a means of grace, because you actually partook of him. When told that Christ was only at the right

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hand of God he replied that the right hand of God was everywhere. If we adopt this view, that Christ exists "along with" the substance, we surrender our distinctive.

A third view is the *sacramental*, that the ordinances are channels of grace. This is held by the Church of England. All these forms are really due to a sort of sacerdotalism, the existence of a sacred order in whom the church really centers, so that the church practically means the officials. Everything is created by the apostles and their successors, so the argument runs; the priest is ordained by them; without the priest there can be no full worship of God; the sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are the means that must create and maintain the spiritual life. The Episcopal Church says baptism is "the great sacrament of our regeneration," and the Supper, or Eucharist, as they call it, is termed "our chief means of communion with our Lord. Dr. R. J. Campbell puts it thus:

The incarnation, the atonement, the extension of both *in the sacraments*, the ministry which guards them and the visible society itself as the sphere of sacrificial grace, all these seem to me to imply each other.

John Calvin taught a modified view that, while the bread and wine are signs of the body and blood of Christ, they are the instrumental means of his presence and the Supper is therefore a *means of grace*.

Zwingli was nearer the truth in saying that the Supper is a memorial or remembrance of the

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sacrifice for sins offered once for all by Christ, and that it is not a continuation or repetition of the original sacrifice of Christ as taught by the Roman Church and by others in the modified ways I have pointed out; but Zwingli did not grasp the idea fully.

The true view is that it is *a symbol*, purely that, *nothing more*, just as baptism is a symbol, baptism symbolizing the emergence of the new life out of death and the Supper symbolizing the feeding of that new life on Christ "who is our life," who said he was the bread of life "that came down from heaven." When he said, "This is my body," "This is my blood," he used a metaphor, which is an unexpanded simile. If he had said, "This is like my body," etc., it would have been a simile, which is an expanded metaphor, and would have meant precisely the same thing.

The other views that I have indicated, are not only foreign to the Scriptures but to the basic ideas of life and grace. To make the ordinances channels through which God's grace can flow to us "limits the universality of divine grace," as Doctor Fairbairn points out.

The Supper is an object-lesson. It helps you to form a mental picture of the Christ in giving himself for your redemption and nourishment. It enshrines that truth, keeps it clear in the mind, appeals to the heart's gratitude and devotion and stimulates the desire to be more worthy of it all. The soul grows hungry and thirsty in your activ-

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ities and that drives you to him, so that this object-lesson makes it all vivid.

Shall we take the transubstantiation or consubstantiation or the sacramental view, or shall we have the simple, clear, and common-sense truth as taught in the Word? That matter will have to be settled if we have a composite church. No question is ever settled at all until it is settled aright. To surrender the truth that it is a symbol, an object-lesson, a sort of keepsake, is to initiate a process that will destroy our distinctive and necessitate its recovery and reinstatement in the world by some other body of people.

### **2. Difficulties in the Way**

There are *obstinate difficulties* in the way of our success, some to be found within our own body, some without.

(1) *The Outside Difficulties.* If we get our distinctive accepted by the whole world it will be through their voluntary acceptance of it, not under any sort of compulsion, for we are not able to use compulsion, we have none to use, and compulsion of others would destroy the distinctive. To accept this would require the abandonment by them of what now stands in the way of it. Here are some things that stand in the way:

*Habit* for one thing. After practising the two substitutes for baptism and practising infant baptism for centuries no church will find it an easy task to change its habits.

*Tradition* is another difficulty. The ideas and

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practises of the denominations have been handed down through generations and, in some instances, for centuries, and tradition has its influence over us all.

*Prejudice* stands in the way, and it does not characterize one group alone, but we all have it. The conflicts of the past generated prejudices, and the echoes of those stormy days salute the eager ear even now. We may deny to each other the respect and fraternal regard to which all true Christians are entitled, and we may wrongly question each other's sincerity. We may find it difficult to go to them in the right spirit, and they may not always receive our approaches in the most loving way, because of prejudices growing out of the past and out of misrepresentations made on both sides.

Another difficulty is *the spirit of controversy* rather than of counsel, of conflict rather than of cooperation. Whatever we do in trying to put others in possession of the distinctive we must do as friends and not as foes, in the spirit of comity and not of conflict, with the desire to promote truth rather than to win a triumph.

Still another difficulty, already implied, is found in *institutions and organizations* that have been constructed on principles in vital conflict with our distinctive and whose very existence depends on forbidding their devotees to receive this distinctive or even investigate it. Such institutions require the "closed mind" in their adherents. The historic, gigantic instance of this is the Church

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of Rome. The powers that brought about the interferences with the working of our distinctive are the powers that brought into its development the Catholic Church. Built upon those perversions of the New Testament church it has through the centuries perpetuated them by union with the State, wherever that has been possible, and has never yet dissolved that unholy union except under compulsion. That Church is not susceptible to change, but many individuals within its ranks may be brought to see and receive the distinctive. Many of its devotees are simple-minded and conscientious, but its essential structure makes its own reformation and its reconstruction on a Biblical and gospel pattern apparently impossible.

There are other tyrannies that require the "closed mind," and they erect almost insuperable barriers against any approach to their people with this truth. But there is a way to meet it. We may so saturate the public mind with the truth as to lessen the success of their propaganda, and we may win numberless individuals among them.

Another difficulty is the prevailing feeling against *the preaching of "doctrine."* "Doctrinal preaching" is very much disliked. But two things may be said. One is that a "doctrine" is a teaching, and teaching is always in order. Besides, doctrine should be lived in such a way as to impress people that it is vital rather than merely "doctrinaire." The prejudice is not so much against a teaching as against what is called "theo-

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logical " teaching in technical terms. We have had enough of these terms. Let us away with them. The "common people" are glad to hear the truth I am speaking of when told in a straightforward way. They wonder why we do not do more of it.

(2) Here are some of the *Difficulties we find Within Our Own Body*, besides the prejudices I have alluded to and the feelings left by the old experiences of controversy:

a. After centuries of struggle with other religious bodies over our right and the right of all men to have complete religious liberty, we are glad to rest and be "*at ease* in Zion." But it may be said that there are sleepless enemies of that truth, and they are now at work in an effort to control sacred interests in every country.

b. After a high degree of success in bestowing the distinctive on our North American Continent, and seeing it spread over the world, and seeing State Churches give way before it, we may feel that *others* have it in such degree that they *will not need any further aid from us*. But already I have pointed out that the idea in its wholeness is not in possession of any other strong body of people, and perhaps a billion people know strictly nothing at all about it.

c. There is a very reasonable desire on our part to enter more deeply into *Christian fellowship and cooperation* with all Christians and show them that we are more than mere fighters and wranglers, that we are their colaborers and com-

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rades. The result of that is a silence on the subject of the distinctive which is unfaithfulness to it, and which is a surprise to all who come to learn how vital and fascinating it is. If we continue to prize laziness above loyalty, fellowship with others above fidelity to them, our unfinished task will be taken out of our hands and given to others. The truth is, we ourselves have been saying so little about it our own people are not informed on the subject, and our friends of other churches are surprised at learning what it is, surprised at the simple and common-sense and fascinating character of it, and surprised at us for our silence about such a remarkable and vital matter. We are forming habits of fatal reticence on that particular subject that it will be difficult to break up.

d. A fourth difficulty is the presence of *problems* among us which sometimes bulk large and seem formidable. But a problem is a sign of life. Some one has said that youth is rich in unsolved problems, and they constitute its charm and its promise. When any one ceases to have problems he is dead, though he may not know it. Ours are the problems that always grow out of a democracy, and are integral in a spiritual democracy. Here are some of them:

(a) The problem of *liberty and leadership*. The primary need of any cause is leaders. But, when leadership becomes drivership or rulership, it lessens the liberty of the individual who is ruled. Yet, in spite of its perils, leadership is

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essential. An autocracy can do fairly well without leaders, for it centers in a ruling family or in institutions with fixed habits and traditions that hold the subjects under control and get results. Our churches are not carried to success by autocratic officials, or by an infallible institution, or by mystical ceremonies and ritual, but by leaders chosen by the people themselves, who in turn hold the leaders responsible to them, their equals and the source of their power. We have the double problem of discovering them, then of preparing and following them. We face the manifold danger of failing to secure such leadership, or of allowing it to become tyranny or of failing to follow it. Those perils have made us the more watchful. We have always had capable leaders, and we shall always be under the necessity of praying for and utilizing them.

(b) *Democracy and discipline* has always been one of our problems. All discipline is self-discipline. We debate and express our individual views, as is perfectly right, and then accept the will of the majority. One result of the discussion and, maybe, wrangling is that we all become educated by that very process. The very best opportunity in the world for self-discipline is offered by a spiritual democracy.

(c) There is the problem of *spirituality and culture*. That used to be a more severe difficulty with us. Our pioneers usually sprang up from among the people, often without much culture. And, because the instruments of culture were

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usually in the hands of the worldly State Church, they often had a dislike for it. There is a constant tide of increase from the uncultivated, the "common people," and we have always had the untrained among us. But we have been solving that problem from the beginning in our country and the pioneers are engaged in doing so everywhere. In early days in America the fathers felt the need of a better-trained ministry, and most of our colleges were founded with that as their aim. Some of those schools thus founded are: Brown, 1764; Colby, 1815; Colgate, 1819; Shurtleff, 1827; Georgetown, 1829; Acadia, 1831; the others in due time. Our theological seminaries were founded, beginning with Colgate, 1820; Newton, 1825; Rochester, 1850; Louisville, 1859; Crozer, 1867; MacMaster, Kansas City, Southwestern, Berkeley, Northern, Eastern following later; and several also among the Negro Baptists.

We are hearing the call for better equipment and answering it. As our fathers met the problems of their day it seems hardly possible that we should be less noble than they in perfecting the schools we now have and in establishing others as they may be needed, for we have greater wealth than they had, and we live in an atmosphere more favorable to the establishment and support of schools. No doubt many men of wealth and consecration will be putting larger and still larger sums into the establishment and equipment of all needed schools and benevolent institutions.

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We have already produced men of letters, and women too, and real spirituality is not incompatible with the very highest culture of the soul in mental, social, and esthetic power, else it would be a reflection on our Maker. We see that. We are solving the problem.

(d) There is the problem of *socializing the individual*. In some nations the social entity has been everything, the individual nothing. The integral idea in any democracy is the value of the individual. In an autocracy he may be ignored. Social culture must never destroy the individuality. Two things are strictly required—that the individual be socialized, be made one of a number, and that he be still more of an individual with all his values increased. Individualty must come to its best when socialized—that is the law of God. While we recognize the right of each and every member of the church to an equal part with the others in all privileges and work, we must put each one into that team-work which is his destiny.

(e) We face another problem, that of *unifying ourselves*. There is a threefold cure for all the ills we feel so keenly in our ranks today: To preach Christ fully, the Christ of the New Testament, the Christ of history, the Christ of Christian experience; to set forth the Baptist distinctive in its essence and clarity, stripping it of all accretions, and leaving it in all its wonderful fascination to appeal to the souls of men; to lead our people to undertake in cooperation the largest, most exacting tasks at home and abroad.

### 3. Results of Seeking the Objective

Immeasurable results will follow our effort to discharge our sacred responsibilities to God, to our own constituency and to our fellow men everywhere. It will give us a *new missionary enthusiasm*. If we are to bestow our distinctive on all who have it not, we shall try to find those who are without it. That will lead us to the discovery that there are about one and three-quarter billions of people in the world, and that at least one billion, or more than half, of them belong to other religions than the Christian. The dazzling numbers and distressing needs stir the missionary instincts within us. They need Christ, every one of them needs him, and, in their relational life, they must have this great truth of ours. Let us once see that, and a new missionary ardor which can never be cooled will glow and grow within us. Deficits in our missionary treasures will never again be known.

It will restore the old passion for saving the lost, and it will stimulate our *new evangelism*. The old motive for bringing people to know our Saviour and Lord will have a new setting and reenforcement. The first duty of each Christian to his Lord is to "go" and find those who have him not, whether it is to go across the room or across the street or across the State or across the ocean. It will mean *personal evangelism*.

It will awaken a *new sense of our stewardship*, stewardship of our time, our talent, our material

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treasures—the trusts committed to us to be imparted to others.

It will compel us to *cultivate and coordinate all the virtues*, to appreciate and appropriate those virtues which our friends and fellow Christians of other denominations who have not our distinctive whole, have cultivated. We see how they have been able to make up for that lack in a measure. One denomination has given aggressive and emotional energy to evangelism and administration and has done wonders even with its handicap. We may imitate that energy and enthusiasm and, with our great distinctive, should achieve much more. Another denomination has pursued methods of education and discipline and reverent public worship with rich results. With the advantage of this great distinctive of ours why should we not equal or even surpass them? Still others hold their people to steadfast efforts with liberal use of ritual and education and esthetic and social culture; and there is nothing in our distinctive to prevent the largest possible use of all means of culture and worship if we make the proper discriminations.

To be sure different temperaments move in different directions, but all may move under the domination of this principle so essential in the total life of mankind. There is not a high form of true culture, whether esthetic, intellectual, artistic, or social, or any possible degree of Christian activity which need be omitted or lessened by us who cherish that principle. In the old days

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of controversy our fathers sometimes felt distaste for their methods of culture and activity. But we shall emulate them in their virtues and thus give our distinctive a new opportunity to embody itself in all the forms of perfection of which we dream. It will stir the motive of Christian fellowship as we strive to crown our fellow Christians of other denominations with what has been so rich a possession of our own.

This will be a unifying power within the individual because it searches the soul, awakens responsibility, and binds him to Christ; a unifying power within each church and the denomination because it gives us fellowship in the unvarying truth of life; a unifying power within the ranks of Christendom, for it furnishes the motive and means for organization that will have an unmovable basis and will leave each free to interpret the Bible as his experiences require. It will relieve Christianity of those unbiblical usages which still bear witness to the superstitions out of which they arose.

Our days of highest prosperity were when we bore witness to the distinctive without flinching, even though it involved us in controversy. But greater days are ahead of us. We are to learn that we can do more with our voluntary cooperation than can those who are under overhead control. We are yet to see greater gifts for missions than we have ever had, greater educational institutions than we now have, greater hospitals and homes for the needy and greater freedom

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than were ever known before. Our distinctive has shown what it can do in times of trouble and persecution. Let us give it a chance in the time of peace and prosperity.

A new art is needed, and the time is ripe for it, the art of the Advocate of our Distinctive. The advocacy must be personal rather than professional, practised by the laymen as well as by the ministers. The advocates of many cults are doing this. They go into homes, raise questions, and then try to settle them in their own way. They are always ready to talk to neighbors and friends about their remarkable ideas, and thus they win many converts. Our aim must be different—simply to put them in possession of the most simple and common-sense and Biblical and practical idea known, and to do it without a desire for victory or for converts, but for the enrichment of our friends with this great truth.

Our efforts to put the whole world in possession of our distinctive whole need not be, should not be, controversial. Controversies usually arise out of different interpretations of the Scriptures, and there are no such differences in this case in the matters concerned. The three lines of inquiry have been conducted by experts of all denominations and of no denomination, and they have all made their final reports—as to the meaning of the words under discussion, as to the original activities and circumstances to which the words apply, and as to the practise in the early centuries. In other words, the dictionary-makers, lexicog-

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raphers, have forever settled for us the meaning of the three Greek words—*baptizo*, to immerse; *rhantizo*, to sprinkle; *echeo*, to pour—and the impossibility of an interchange of meaning between the three or any two of them; the interpreters of the Scriptures, exegetes, have settled for all people the use which the Scriptures make of those words so that its purpose in using them and the context in which they are used make the meaning of the dictionary as clear as sunlight; the historians have told us when and why changes were made. All of these matters are settled. We need not argue. We need only say: "You have consulted your dictionary and read your Bible and your historian; now return to the abandoned truths, let us close the breach made by departures from those truths so that we may have the old fellowships restored."

We have been silent about it so long that many of our own people are wondering what it is we really hold which makes us different from others. We have been tired of controversy and have wanted to show the others that we can be "good fellows" and cooperate with them. That is right so far, but we have withheld from our own people what they have a right to know and sorely need to know.

And people of other denominations are wondering what it is that makes us different from them, and why it is that we never say anything about it. Some of them imagine and even say that we do not think a man can be saved without

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being baptized when, as a matter of fact, no one teaching that idea about baptism is a Baptist at all.

When they hear our story, simply and frankly and fraternally told, they are usually charmed with it, and they always wonder why people who hold such a fascinating and essential truth are not telling everybody about it.

Surprising results will always follow the right sort of advocacy of it. I have had some delightful experiences in telling it both in public and in private. When I am to speak on it in my own pulpit I usually announce it a week or two in advance and frankly tell the people what they may expect. I also say that I am announcing it in advance so that any one who is anxious to hear such a discussion may be sure to come and that any one who does not care to hear it may have the opportunity of staying away. No one has ever seemed to stay away purposely, and I have never failed to hear surprise and delight expressed at the fascinating character of our views. I give one instance.

In a certain city where I was preaching a young couple came, she a Baptist and he a member of another church. She brought her letter, and he became a regular attendant with her. They are a cultured and lovable couple. I called on them one evening and, when something was said about his attending, I remarked, "I wish you could come all the way with us." "I am thinking of it," he replied. Then I began to tell him what really made one a Baptist. At once he spoke up

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and said: "Yes, I heard you on that subject. I was there when you announced it in advance, and I said to myself I must not miss it, for I wanted to be informed. I heard it, and it answered to something within my own soul." The result was that I baptized him in a little while and he is now a prominent and useful member of that church.

We have the most popular idea on earth. The world is ready for it now as never before. Preachers and teachers and all the members may win new victories for Christ and for humanity by informing themselves carefully, living it sensibly, and advocating it wisely and lovingly.

## VII

### INSTRUMENTALITIES AND AGENCIES

When you joined the church you found instrumentalities and agencies already devised for accomplishing its mission to its members and to the outside world. They were worked out in experience and may not have been perfect. In fact, there was at once opened up to you an opportunity and an obligation to improve all the methods in use by the church. One of the benefits of our democracy is that each one may use his own ideas and add to those that are already at work. Methods are shaped by the combined wisdom of the group and may be constantly reshaped to fit constantly growing enterprises.

#### 1. Local Work

The local work of your church is fourfold:

(1) *It is evangelistic.* That is simply saying that, when you become a Christian, you want to help some one else find Christ. I take that as the first work of the church, to be preceded, of course, by teaching and all the other means of getting the truth of Christ before the people and into their minds. There are three ways of doing this work: through the appeal of the preacher in his preaching; through the application of the

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truth in the teaching service of the church, the Sunday school; through the personal efforts of the members, including, of course, the minister. Your church is pledged to win to Christ every one within the sphere of its influence. As long as a single unconverted person is within its reach, that sort of work is unfinished and is therefore imperative.

(2) *It is a disciplinary work*, that is, it is a work of making disciples in the fullest sense. The church disciplines by educating its members. It has some sort of educational system, even though it may be only a loosely organized Sunday school. Classes in the Bible at the Sunday school; classes in missions, whether at Sunday school or separate from it; and classes in methods of study and teaching and work are simply imperative in these days of experts in all lines of work and study. The church trains not only by education in the Bible and missions and methods of work, but by assigning work to the members and aiding them in the actual doing of it. That work may be individual or cooperative; it may be wholly within the church, or largely out in the community, or in a more distant part of the world field.

It also disciplines by watch-care, one over the other, the older helping the younger by example and suggestion and companionship, the more mature putting their strength at the service of the weaker. It disciplines by its ideals. It disciplines by guidance, correction, appreciation.

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(3) *The church coordinates its members in the great enterprise of putting the whole world in possession of its Saviour and King*, whose right it is to rule over the world and over every person in it. That will include local work and community work of several kinds.

Every church must have its organized school studying the Bible and missions and the history of Christianity and all the methods of work that have commended themselves to its intelligence. If your church has not such a school, it may be you are the one to take the initiative in it or to suggest and help establish it.

(4) A fourth enterprise of your church is *the uplift of your whole community*, not only through the influence of its members on it, but by means of special effort in Christianizing its laws, caring for the needy, educating its citizens, and driving out its evils.

### **2. The Wider Work**

1. *Your church bears its part in the cooperative work of all the churches of the whole denomination.* It is one of a group of churches forming a District Association, which meets annually. That Association has no authority over the churches. On the contrary, it is the creature of the churches, and they have complete authority over it. It surveys the field occupied by the churches composing it, hears reports of what is done by each church, takes an outlook upon the whole State or Province in which it is located,

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and upon the nation and the world as well, outlines suggestive programs for work in the local churches, and stimulates them with information and hints as to methods of work and as to their vital fellowship in that work.

For each State or Province there is an organization which serves for its field a purpose similar to that of the District Association, while, for a whole nation, or a large part of it, there is a still larger organization. The value of these organizations is that they preserve the voluntary principle and add to its force the stimulus of combined wisdom and voluntary fellowship. Of course human nature is so imperfect that a more authoritative control over the churches by some overhead body might get larger results at the outset, but not in the outcome.

Note that these larger bodies promote world-wide missions, education in each State or Province or nation or mission field, and benevolence of various kinds, including social service in some form. Get the denominational records and reports of work done over the whole world.

(2) *The wider work has reference to our co-laborers of the other denominations* who are doing a work corresponding to our own. Our relation to them must be that of sympathy and good-will. It will at times be a relation of active cooperation. Community work may often require not only the individual cooperation of Christian people of all the denominations in the community, but actual church cooperation, as in

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supporting institutions like the Y. M. C. A., the Y. W. C. A., the Red Cross, homes for unfortunates of different classes, temperance movements, community-wide evangelism, etc. In opening new missions we should consider the work being done in a given place by those bodies, and should be wise enough to spend our money where those most needy will get the benefit of it. All this can and must be done with a view to fulfilling our mission to give the world the whole truth as we see it. We need never be untrue to our principles in such work.



PART III

YOUR PART



# I

## WHAT YOU ARE TO DO

You must have a part in this varied and ambitious work of your church, both its local and general work. In joining you accepted its scheme of work, with such improvements as you and others may be able to make in it. Not only a part, but your own personal, specific part must you have in it.

### 1. Why?

(1) *You will suffer if you do not.* You will suffer in your own estimate of yourself. You are adapted by the new Christian nature and prompted by your own Christian impulses to have a part in that work and, if you fail to do so for any reason whatsoever, you will have an incurable discontent with yourself. You will often say to yourself: "I'm the one who made a covenant with some good people and am not keeping it. Worse still, my covenant expresses profound and essential relations with those people, and I am living in violation of them." The consciousness of not being true to your pledges will cause you pain.

You will be unhappy if you fail to do your part.

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The one who drifts  
And never lifts  
A burden from the dust,  
Can never know the heartfelt glow  
Which yonder reaper must.

It will mean disease of the soul—low spirits, sour temper, wounded pride, heartache, fatty degeneration of the heart, torpid emotions, irregular action of the vital processes, wrong blood pressure, bad blood, cold heart, religious dyspepsia, bad tongue (very bad!). You will be a trouble-maker. You will be apt to become what is called a grouch.

You will suffer in the estimation of others. In selecting those on whom they can always depend, they will pass you by as not dependable. They may even apply to you the repulsive term “slacker,” and do so in perfect justice. Your reputation among your brethren is an asset far too valuable to give up.

(2) *The work will suffer.* You will lower the moral tone of the church. Your coldness will lower the temperature of the whole body. You will lessen its energy and efficiency, for, in carrying you, it will carry a useless weight and thereby use up power that is needed in doing something useful and constructive. You will lessen the spiritual value of the church as well as its vitality. You will compel the church to carry in its system so much undigested matter, which is sure to produce in some degree a toxic condition. Spiritual disease will afflict the body,

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and the germ center of that disease will be—you.

(3) *Some good people will suffer also*, for there are in the church generous souls who will do more than their share in order to do your neglected share. Some work will go forever undone unless you do it, something that no one will know about, no one can get into contact with, no one can really do, but you.

(4) *Others outside the church will suffer*. The volume of the church's work will be lessened and its quality injured. The community will get less than it is entitled to. Some people will be neglected. The evangelistic, the benevolent, and the disciplinary work will suffer, and all who would benefit by your efforts will lose through your failure to function as a covenant-keeping and duty-doing member.

### **2. How?**

I said that you are to have a part, and that must be your own personal part.

It means two things. One is that you must do many things by yourself and of yourself, such as giving your own share of the money to be expended and doing the tasks that you alone can do. There are opportunities that you alone can see and you alone can seize. There are tasks that you alone can undertake and perform, words to speak, deeds to do, a personal touch to give that no one other than yourself can even think of, much less do.

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It also means that you are to do your part of the common tasks in the team-work which is so necessary. Perhaps you will furnish the idea, or the plan, or the directive oversight, and thereby make the work of others possible and effective, or you may work at some humble part of the task which your talents fit you for, while others work in the limelight and in the positions of prominence.

The team-work in which you are to engage is team-work with the whole body, as when you put your share of money into the whole sum, or teach in the church school, or engage in some special campaign.

It will also be team-work in smaller groups, or small communities, or in a small body of officers.

Or it may be team-work with some one person, as Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Timothy, Luther and Melancthon, and hundreds of teams of two have done. Two ones added make two, but place the two ones side by side and they made eleven. You and the other man by your team-work multiply each other, you complement, complete each other.

You are to have a part in every activity of the church. You must be an evangelist, a private, personal, persistent, loving evangelist. That is the highest work of all. It involves so much on your part—knowledge of the person whom you wish to lead to Christ and an understanding of his needs; knowledge of the truths he must have;

## *What You Are to Do*

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knowledge of the way to state the truths and to make the appeal. It involves prayer to God and cooperation with the Spirit of God, for it is he that worketh in you both to will and to do his work, and it is he that convicts men of their need of Christ. In winning a person to Christ you bring more to him than you can in anything else you ever can do for him. You bring Christ and all the wonders of the reign of God in the soul. The blessings you secure to that person never cease to ennoble him. You will often need the help of some other Christian in winning others.

When you take part your growth is more complete and more rapid and your joy is greater. It is like the joy that Jesus felt, as it is said, "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." It was the joy he felt amidst the agonies of Calvary as he thought of the millions he would save from sin by suffering on the cross. You will help to put that sort of spirit into the whole church.

You will have your part in the educational work of the church. There is a place for you, and it is your own personal, peculiar place—in the Sunday school as a pupil or officer or teacher. You will have your place in the missionary work of the church, in the missionary studies, and in the missionary giving.

We speak of the benevolent work of the church, its contributions to the needy, its ministry to the sick and the troubled. Your part in those

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forms of work is awaiting you. It will be your own personal work, your part in the organized work of the church.

It will require study and prayer, a ready mind, and a loving heart.

### **3. Some Suggestions**

(1) Grasp our great distinctive clearly so that you will always know when it is disregarded or imperiled.

(2) Be able to explain it to any one, giving a reason for the conviction that is in you.

(3) Be sure to have our total objective before you all the time.

(4) Hold to the distinctive and aim at the objective in a large and fraternal rather than in a small and jealous spirit.

(5) Accept your responsibility for the preservation of this distinctive and the attainment of our objective.

(6) Understand the complete set of gospel truths to which this belongs.

(7) Be ready to undertake the first task that is offered to you.

(8) Be on the lookout for special work that you alone can do.

(9) Familiarize yourself with the work that others are doing, in order to find where you can assist.

(10) Do not allow your devotion to the work of the church to be affected by circumstances without or by your own moods.

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(11) See how much you can do and not how little you can get off with.

(12) Be sure, some time, to do more than you are able to do. You will never do all that you can do unless you sometimes do more than you can do. The very effort to do the impossible, if you have confidence in God, will bring to you new strength, and that makes the impossible possible. God always gives strength when he gives a task, and he is sure to give a task greater than you are equal to till you put your hand to it and find his power energizing you.

(13) Seek to have a good reputation with your fellow Christians, not simply for the sake of the reputation, but in order to have a character worthy of the reputation and to have the opportunity which the reputation will bring you.

(14) Give the church a good reputation in the community.

(15) Make your own church indispensable in the great work of the denomination.

(16) Have some part, through your church, in every form of work which the denomination is undertaking in every one of its fields throughout the world.

(17) Avail yourself of all the means of culture that the church has devised, and devise others if you are able, for the church as well as for yourself.

(18) Have an understanding with yourself that you will not only have faith in your fellow Christians, but enable them to have complete

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faith in you. Faith compels faithfulness. Fidelity wins confidence.

(19) Send to your Baptist headquarters and get suggestive forms of organization for your work. They have outlines of methods for work in all departments—Sunday school, men's work, women's work, young people's work, junior work. Their little pamphlets embody the wisdom of the experts.

## II

### THE POWERS WITH WHICH YOU WORK

#### 1. Speech

I begin with this because it is the most obvious and representative of all your powers. It is a distinctive of personality. If you were a cat or a dog or an owl or a mule, you would not need to "say something," but, as a human being, the first imperative is to speak when you are accosted by any one or commanded by the voice of duty.

Your powers of speech serve the double purpose of *expressing* what is in you and *imparting* it to others. You may do that in other ways, but this is the superlative way. For that reason we are not surprised to find how wonderfully made are the organs of speech. The power to convert the vibrating air into words and give those words such variations in pitch and power and content of emotion as to express what your mind thinks, your heart feels, your conscience approves, and your will determines, is far more marvelous than any of the startling inventions of these scientific days.

But that is only half of the wonder. The other half is that there are receiving-stations attuned to your speech which can take in your

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words, vibrate to them, and reproduce them in souls like your own. It is somewhat like the telephone. You speak your words into the receiver and that starts the air to vibrating. Those vibrations of air are converted into electrical vibrations and, flashing along the line with lightning speed, are reconverted into air vibrations at the other end, and enter the ear of the listener in the original form into which you put what was in your mind, imparting the words with their pitch and power and feeling—a marvel indeed. Remember that in speech you aim to impart as well as express.

In taking your part you have the double pleasure of expressing and imparting, each a joy of a high order, especially the latter.

In addition to the pleasure you give yourself there is the discipline through which you take yourself. It is a manifold discipline—discriminating in character, discarding what should never be expressed, much less imparted; selecting what is suitable to be expressed at a given time and to a given person or group of persons; study of the needs of those to whom you would impart a truth or emotion or purpose; controlling yourself in the doing of it; effacing yourself in the interest of others—a vital discipline in unselfishness and effectiveness. All of this you do in the interest of unselfish service to your fellow men.

I am not referring to public speaking especially, but to the use of the powers of speech, whether in

## *Powers With Which You Work*

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public or in private. Perhaps you may be called on to be a preacher of the gospel, and in that case you will have to use this mighty power both publicly and privately. The early disciples "went everywhere, preaching the word," and the word for "preaching" is about the same as our word "talking," almost the same as "chatting." You are to achieve your part in that wonderful enterprise which we have been considering, by what you say, though not in that way alone.

An instrument capable of setting forth what is in you in such way that others can appropriate it and convert it into similar thought and emotion and purpose, is a power that can wreck as well as upbuild. It can awaken others to a sense of their needs and their possibilities, can energize and encourage and fraternize and humanize and divinize them; yet, on the other hand, it can express your very worst till it will turn on you to derange and even demonize you, while it will chill and cut and stab and poison and wreck those to whom you impart it.

Therefore, train the powers with which you express yourself in order to make the best success of it in your power; have the right thing to impart to those who need; know as perfectly as possible what their needs are, both specific and general. Remember what James tells us, in chapter three of his epistle, about the evils as well as the value of the tongue as the instrument for expression and impartation. Also recall the words of Longfellow in his little poem about "The

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Arrow and the Song." He shot an arrow into the air and years afterward found it unbroken in the heart of an oak, while the song, from beginning to end, he found again in the heart of a friend. Remember that, when you speak, what God approves is his own word, and that word cannot return to him void. (Isa. 55 : 11.) There is scarcely a blessing that cannot be floated to another on the current of consecrated conversation, and when you see what your appeal and instruction and warning can do in restraining and educating and comforting and ennobling people, you will surely want to train every power of expression to its highest and use it to the utmost. But back of the organs of speech is something else. It is the power of

### **2. Thought**

I said the organs of speech express what you think about. So you serve with thought-power. That is a source on which the speech draws. A tongue cannot run without something behind it. Unless you use your thought-power well, your tongue will lack certain important things to say that it ought to have at command. Think through your tasks, your great body of truths, think of your associates, your fellow men for whom you are to work. Train your judgments to work through your tongue.

Here are three duties: to use your powers of thought; to train them, both by use and by service; to understand all the tasks assigned to you.

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Know all the mission fields and as many names of the missionaries as you can, know the theory and history of modern missions. Know the principles of religious education, which are employed, or ought to be employed, in the Sunday school and in all the departments of church education. Know the body of truths that are vital and foundational in the teachings of Christianity. The intellect cannot be neglected by the Christian worker. In truth, as a teacher, you have the best opportunity to become really cultured that is possessed by anybody, other things being equal, when you consider your associates, your textbooks, and the great truths involved.

### **3. Heart-power**

John the Baptist said he was only a voice; but voice is the instrument of mind and heart and of every other power of the man. You put heart into the work, for the tongue expresses what is in the heart, and it must be worthy to be expressed.

First of all, you must control the production of feeling, both the character and volume of it, a very simple thing. You cannot command the proper feelings to come up from the depths of the soul in their suitable amounts; but you can feed the soul properly, and the right feelings will come by growth. You maintain a censorship over the heart. Read what Jesus says in Matthew 15 : 18-20 about the output of the evil heart.

Secondly, you must direct the current of the heart's output upon the work you are to do,

direct it through the proper channel of expression. That will energize your ideas and words and make your words welcome and effective.

### **4. Conscience**

Conscience is the power within you that approves or disapproves of what you do. It must be ever active, but it must be instructed by the word of God and sensitized by the Spirit of God who dwells within you. There is nothing at all that you can ever do which the conscience will not approve or disapprove. As a driving-power, it makes any duty possible and agreeable.

### **5. Will-power**

The thing that distinguishes man from the brute is personality, and the most distinctive thing about personality is the will. There is nothing that is impossible with God, and there is scarcely anything that God will not do for and through the one who uses his will in the service of God. The conversion of a soul is really the surrender of the will to do God's will and, instead of weakening it, that surrender brings into the soul the power of God's will. The art of willing is a central art and a well-instructed and persistent will is a great treasure in the work you are called to do. It will take you through all opposing obstacles and keep you ever at it. Every form of distraction will be in your way, and a holy purpose is the only thing that will keep you from falling or turning aside.

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### **6. Social Power**

Consecrate to the cause of your church your talent for friendship and social enjoyment and your talent for gratifying the social needs of others. If your social standing is commanding, that is a gift of God to be used for your people. It belongs to humanity. The church needs it.

### **7. Executive Power**

Whatever executive power you have is sorely needed, nothing else is more needed. It is required in teaching your class and in handling them for the high ends you aim at, as a sort of army, or regiment in the church army. You will need it in leading the young people, or the mission circle, or the committee of which you are chairman. If you are not gifted with executive ability, then appreciate it in others, and be a good follower of the leader in whose group you belong.

### **8. Looks**

The countenance, the bearing, as well as the tones of voice, are a means of working. They add to or subtract from what you do. Looks and facial expression alone, without words or deeds, have a vital power. You may do a thing with a look that will render the deed impotent; you may say a thing in a tone of voice that will deny what you say.

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### **9. Hands**

Yours must be a head, hand, and heart religion. Jesus said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" Read the second chapter of James and hear what he says about professing great things while doing nothing. Then turn to 1 John 3 : 7 and read what is said about it. There is enough to keep many hands busy, and you must have a part in all the well-doing that is going on in the church, in the community, in the world. Hand religion really includes foot religion, includes all active service.

### **10. Money**

Your money is an instrument of service, and a great big instrument it is. John Wesley had the right of it when he said that every man ought to make as much as possible, save as much as possible, give as much as possible. Here are some facts about your money that will help you to know its meaning in your Christian life:

(1) It all belongs to God, because you belong to him by creation and by your choice of Christ as Saviour whereby you are his by recreation in Christ; because the raw material of wealth was put into the ground for you; because you have been especially blessed by him in your use of those materials; because that which makes it all valuable is due to the civilization which his providence has developed; because all your powers with which you have gained it are the gift of God and,

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as he owns you and the powers with which you work, and the material on which you work, you can never have anything at all which you can own absolutely.

(2) It can all be used for the good of man, even the part you hold back for your own support and the part you use in continuing your business. You can make money in such a way as to be doing good with every cent of it, whether you are an employer or an employee.

(3) You can turn that money into character, your own character, in the way you make it and in the way you use it after it is made; into the characters of those on whom you use it, both while making it and afterward.

(4) It is the ripened fruit of your own powers at work and can be made to represent you in the church and in the mission field.

(5) God wants you to recognize his ownership over it and over you by having a definite part of it put into his definite work. The part that seems right is one-tenth. Write to "Layman" of Chicago for literature giving a complete treatment of the tithing principle.

This is the point: your money is an instrument of service, a powerful, convincing, effective instrument. Learn its nature, its value, and the art of using it.

### **11. Relationships**

Your relationships in the home, in the church, and in the community are all endowments of

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power. You begin your work with those with whom you are connected in these ways. The ties that bind are the trails along which influence goes and efforts are made for the good of those with whom you are connected in those ways.

### **12. Personality**

That is your own self, that entity in which are centered all those powers of which I have been speaking. You yourself are the important factor in your work. Emerson said, "What you are sounds so loud I cannot hear what you say." You are behind the words you say, the deeds you do, and you impart the subtle power of yourself to them. The nurture and the use of that self which uses all those powers is the paramount concern. Be what you should be, and you will almost surely say what you should say and do what you should do. The how of it is expressed in the words of the evangelistic song which says, "I'll be what you want me to be, dear Lord." Self-making and self-mastering are not easy, but there is a very definite way of doing it.

We always take account of personal influence. You have it. Make it as big a thing as possible. Look again through all those several powers of which I have spoken, and be sure of three things: That you use each power thoroughly and purposely; that you use them in true harmony and balance, each supporting the other; that all the time you develop them for still greater usefulness.

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All of these powers head up in your personality, and they constitute your opportunity, or fit you to meet your opportunities.

Remember also these two facts:

First, that you can never be happy unless you follow this course. All who work with all their powers are happy. Not one is grouchy and disagreeable. There are workers who are grouchy, and some of them are quite useful; but they do not work with all their powers, and they are not nearly so useful as they could be. If you are not useful in the whole range of your talents and powers you will be uncomfortable within yourself and in your association with others.

Secondly, that your work will not be in vain, cannot be in vain. Listen to Paul: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15 : 58). As he also wrote to a young minister, so he says to you, "Take heed unto thyself" (1 Tim. 4 : 16).

### III

## THE POWER FROM ABOVE

You accomplish your work in the making of character, your own and that of others, by the use of the powers with which God has endowed you by nature and by grace, but those powers are unequal to the stupendous achievement. You have to secure an added power that will vitalize and energize and fertilize them. There is an element in the perfected human character which no unaided human powers are competent to place there or to develop it after it has been placed there.

#### **1. That Power Has Its Source in God the Father**

That is true because all power came originally from him. We may distinguish four different kinds of power. One is physical. We appreciate that; we need it; it is the instrument of great deeds. Another is psychical, something that resides in the spirit and shows itself in thought and emotion and all the other ways in which your spirit exhibits itself. Those powers are necessary in God's service. A third power is that of the personality, and we know how important that is. A fourth power comes directly from God into the heart which reverences and trusts and obeys

## *The Power from Above*

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him. That is the power I am talking about just now.

You must have that in a personal way. Paul tells the Philippians, "work out your own salvation," because it has already been worked, and it is God "who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2 : 12, 13). He did this for his pleasure, and they were to do it for the same reason. All your worth comes from that source, and all your work is made possible by power from him. Whatever you are trying to do will fail at some vital point, even though you make use of all your noblest powers, unless you get something from God which is missing in your natural make-up and is required in the product you are trying to turn out. "My God shall supply every need of yours" (Phil. 4 : 19). "We are God's fellow workers" (1 Cor. 3 : 9).

### **2. It is Made Possible to Us Through Jesus Our Saviour**

It is brought to us by him. Here are several things he does: First, he reveals God to you and to those whom you are helping to find him and work for him. To reveal means to uncover. You see God in him. Secondly, he brings you and God together in peace by making an atonement for your sins and making you love God. Thirdly, he makes you a coworker with God. Do you try to bring some one to God? He says, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me"

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(John 14: 6). Do you wish to know the Father and to teach men what he is? "No man knoweth the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him."

In all this work of making yourself a good Christian and helping others to do the same, you are getting power from the Father through the Son. That is what he did in himself, what he did and is doing in you, what he tells you to do, shows you how to do, secures for you the power to do; as Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." He gives you the motive: "The love of Christ constraineth us." You have a vital connection with God by Christ's life, as John said, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1: 4). Paul says, "It is no longer I, but Christ that liveth in me, and that life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2: 20). Know Christ, and you will know God. Keep in touch with him, and the sacred current will flow into your life.

### **3. Christ is Mediated to You by the Holy Spirit**

In the same way you will bring others to Christ and strengthen them in Christ.

When Jesus was leaving he said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

(1) It is that Spirit who will awaken those whom you desire to bring to Christ, to a sense of

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their need. Jesus told in advance that when the Spirit came, he would convict the world of its needs. (John 16 : 8-11.)

(2) It is the Spirit who will teach you the meaning of truth and its use. (John 16 : 12-15.)

(3) He helps our infirmities in several ways, as Paul tells the Romans (Rom. 8 : 26); he leads us (Rom. 8 : 14), becomes the consciousness of our childship to the Father (Rom. 8 : 15-17), guides and empowers us to pray (Rom. 8 : 26, 27), enables us to know that all things work together for our good. (Rom. 8 : 28.)

(4) He is the author of the whole Christian character, its graces being his fruits. (Gal. 5 : 22-24.)

The Spirit does his work with you and through you, but works from within you. Jesus said he would send the Spirit, and then called him by the name *Paraklete* in Greek, which means "one called to the side of another to help." The Spirit was called to our side by our needs, called to take the place of the departing Christ, but he does not stay at our side: he takes his place within, and from that point of vantage does the many things I have spoken of and many others. "He shall be in you," said Jesus. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" asks Paul in First Corinthians 3 : 16.

The Spirit directed Philip to the Ethiopian and caught him away after that work was done. (Acts 8 : 29-40.) So he will help you in your

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work. You need his power and wisdom and love. Seek him. Depend on him. Yield to him. He is always within you, even when you are dull and indifferent and self-willed; always there, but often grieved (Eph. 4 : 30), his power often quenched (1 Thess. 5 : 19), but always at work in you, and always seeking to work through you.

## IV

### HOW TO GET THAT POWER

#### 1. Listening to God

There are three ways of doing that: in receiving what Jesus says to you; in responding to the Spirit's promptings within you; in getting the teachings of the Bible. I am speaking especially of the latter, though that includes what Jesus says to you as well as what it says about him and about God and about you.

The Bible is the story of the revelation of God in Christ, beginning with the creation of the race, its sin, and the promise of a Redeemer, tracing the history of the arrangements God made in getting the world ready for Christ, then giving an authentic and authoritative account of his life and his teachings and his plans.

Your success in being a Christian in yourself and a good "Christian among Christians" will be in exact proportion to your success in learning the Bible and making use of it. No other book can take its place, for it is the only book that has what you are compelled to have in your blessed business. Here are some of the considerations:

(1) It is the only book that tells the story of Jesus, your only Saviour and Teacher and King.

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(2) It tells that story accurately, adequately, authoritatively, for it tells it in human language, out of human experience, and makes an exhibit of all divine resources to meet all human needs.

(3) It is the source-book of all the other books that are worth while, the source of their ideas, or characters, or style, or morals.

(4) It is the source-book of all the great characters since that time.

(5) It is the source-book of the great laws that are operative in the world, for the laws of America and Canada are based on the English Common Law, the English law on the Code of Justinian, and Justinian on Moses, while the teachings and spirit of Jesus have softened it all for us.

(6) It is the source-book of our civilization, the only civilization that has not been self-destructive, a civilization that can endure only by being controlled by this book.

(7) It is essential to a healthy, happy, and victorious life. It has been compared to light, for it leads you to the fountain of light, which is Jesus. It has been compared to food, "sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb." It has been compared to the sword, "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6 : 17; Heb. 4 : 12, 13).

(8) It is the only book in which you can find original information on certain vital matters. One of those matters is the origin of the world and of the race. Here is the account of it which

## *How to Get That Power*

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science is seeking. Another matter is that of the origin of sin. Still another is the fact of immortality. There are a good many reasons why we believe we shall live on after the experience of death, but the Bible is at hand with definite and satisfying information. There is the matter of the resurrection. Nature has hints, but no proof of it. Some lofty souls have dreamed of such a destiny for soul and body, but the Bible tells about it and tells it in a way to satisfy every normal question of the human mind.

Yes, your success in being a good Christian will be in the degree in which you make a conquest of the Bible as "the man of your counsel," the guide of your life. And it will enable you to do that for the simple reason that it will connect you up with the source of the power which you must have, the power that originates in God the Father, flows out to us through Jesus, and is vitalized in the soul by the Holy Spirit, the One who quickened us when we were "dead in trespasses and in sin" (Eph. 2 : 1).

Here are four things it will give you: (a) Knowledge, which is the more immediate and objective result of reading and studying it. (b) Insight, for it is "living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him

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with whom we have to do " (Heb. 4 : 12, 13). (c) Devotion. That means inspiration and energy and enthusiasm and never-wearying fidelity. (d) Skill, that is, tact. *Tactus* is the Latin word for touch. You have a sense of physical touch which does two things for you. It discloses what a given substance is—even though your eyes be shut—and it suggests how you are to deal with it. You touch a rose or a piece of iron with closed eyes, and that sense of touch will do those two things for you. You will never try to handle the iron as if it were a rose. So your spirit touches people, and that sense of touch serves you in those two ways. You handle each person in a different way, and Jesus gives you that touch through the blessed book. That skill implies love and sympathy and patience—the Bible disciplines you in that manifold grace. You learn to know what you need and what others need ; you learn how to apply the teachings of the Bible to that need. The one who learns that art becomes the most useful person in the community. You will never know what your work is or how to do it or have the power or even the inclination to do it unless you know the word.

There are six encouragements right here. One is that the Bible is the most knowable book there is. The most learned person in all the world will find something new in the Bible every time he goes over the pages he has been reading since childhood, and the most ignorant person in the whole community will find something he can take

## *How to Get That Power*

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hold of and live by. Another is that one bit of knowledge always leads to more. And another is that it grows more and more fascinating as you learn it; its yoke is easy; its burden, light. Again, it has something for you, whatever the crying needs of your own life or the needs of those you serve as a Christian. Fifthly, it discloses its truths in the degree in which you yield yourself to its sway. Jesus said that when he told the people, "If any man willeth to do his will [of my Father who is in heaven], he shall know of the teaching" (John 7 : 17). You learn by doing. That's true in all learning, and especially true here. Sixthly, if you will apply the word faithfully to yourself, you will be able to apply it helpfully to others. It is trustworthy. Commit yourself to it.

The question of how to possess yourself of the Bible and its wonderful teachings is a practical one. You need, first, equipment. That means a well-printed copy, preferably in the American Revised edition, with maps, a Bible dictionary, and index, all in the same cover, or in separate volumes. One book may contain most of this. Next, you need a method of using it. That method will contain a time element, so that you will be regular in your study. It will involve an objective, meeting special needs in yourself and in others. Method is essential. You will have to create the method best adapted to your own case, using those two elements of time and an objective.

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### 2. Talking to God

By that I mean prayer. Reading the Scriptures—listening to God—and prayer—talking to God—will put you in such contact with the source of power that you will never lack anything.

You have to pray anyhow, because you are a child of God and you cannot help talking to your Father. Prayer is the very breath of the new life in Christ. You would be utterly abnormal if you did not want to speak to your Father. No normal child wants to keep always utterly dumb before its father.

God wants you to talk to him, else he would be an unnatural Father. He enjoys having you talk to him. Of course he does. He wants to do many things for you which he would be utterly unable to do if you did not pray. You also, as a Christian, desire to be what it is impossible for you to become without prayer, and you want to do many things which you cannot do unless you pray.

So you see that your vigor, your enjoyment, your growth, your success in work all require that you pray.

(1) *What is Prayer?*

When I say prayer I mean one or all of four things.

a. *Prayer means association with God, fellowship with him, being conscious of his controlling, if not always comfortable, presence.* We may

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say simply communion with God, whatever you may or may not ask of him or say to him. You associate with him because of fellowship with him; that fellowship with him is due to the relationships that exist between you two. He made man in his image, and that broken image is restored by Christ. You are reborn into his family. You are akin to him. There is something like him in you. The restoration of that old likeness was begun when you were reborn into the image of his sinless and eternal Son, Jesus, your Saviour and Elder Brother, the typical member of the family. It is being perfected as you grow like Christ. That kinship draws you to God and you enjoy being with him. He wants that form of prayer which we call "conscious communion" with him, to be habitual. Perhaps that is what Paul meant when he said, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5 : 17)—be ever in an attitude of such fellowship with the Father that it would be entirely easy to utter your supplication any minute—be always in the spirit of prayer. God wants you to be aware of him every minute, conscious of his presence, for he is actually always with you. Then why not be aware of that presence?

b. *Prayer means the utterance of your praise and thanks* for what he has done for you and for what he is, and always has been, to you. He has already done so much more than you could ever ask him for, that the volume of your praise should be larger than the volume of your peti-

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tions. It is hard for you to have the fellowship with him without spending most of your thought on being grateful. You will be thanking him most of the time. The word "thank" and the word "think" are the same except for one letter. They are actually from the same root word, and the meaning is that the normal process of thinking is one of thanking God for what he has done and for what he is. The words "praise" and "appraise" and "prize" and "price" and "precious" have a common origin. You appraise God's value in praising him, tell how precious he is, show how you prize him, set a superlative price on him. The word "worship" is a contraction of the word "worthship." In your worship you declare God's worth in so far as a human being can declare the infinite.

c. *Prayer is petition* for what you need, or think you need: for wisdom (James 1 : 5-8); for forgiveness (1 John 1 : 9; Isa. 55 : 7); for strength for your work and every needed blessing (Ps. 37 : 4). You will need to ask many things for yourself. (1 John 5 : 14, 15.) The teachings of the Scriptures on the subject are full and stimulating. Search out its teachings for yourself.

d. *Prayer will often be intercession.* That word "intercession" means walking between. You are farther along, at least in some things, than a certain other person, walking on ahead of him. Then walk in between that person and God and get something from God for him that he

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may not know how to get for himself or may need, over and above what he himself is able to get. He will need, at the least, the love which you put into your petition for him. There is a social value in praying for others. We are tied up in the bundle of life with others, and we must make their interest our own when we pray.

You will be able to get strength and wisdom for some of your tasks only through prayer, and you will be able to secure blessings for others through prayer, blessings that they will go without all their lives unless you pray for them.

Read the farewell interview of Samuel with the people as he turned them over to the king whom they were determined to have. When, in emotional contrition, they asked him to pray for them, his response was one of the noblest words ever uttered: "Far be it from me that I should sin against Jehovah in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam. 12 : 23). Especially do I recommend the team-work praying which Jesus invites us to do in Matthew 18 : 19: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven." And I ask if you do not think you sin against any one who needs your prayers, when you fail, or cease, to pray for that one. If you can secure vitally needed blessings through prayer, it is your sin not to pray; if you can meet some urgent need of others by praying for them, surely you will not do so wrong a thing as not to pray.

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### *(2) Some Suggestions About How to Pray.*

a. *You are to pray with every power of body and soul, with every power you have.*

b. *Your praying should take account of every interest of yours, for God is interested in everything that is of interest or importance to you. Cultivate the habit of talking to God about everything and leaving with him what sort of answer to give, yes or no, and, if yes, what it shall be, when he will give it, and how he will do it.*

c. *Let your praying take account of everything of importance to others.* You should spend more time in talking to God about others than about your own personal interests, for there are so many more of them.

d. *Let your praying take account of all of God,* not of his love alone, but of his power; not of his power alone, but of his perfect knowledge, for he knows all things; not of his knowledge alone, but of his wisdom, for he knows exactly what is best; not of his wisdom alone, but of his omnipresence as well, for he can deliver the answer to your prayers over in China as well as in your home; not of his omnipotence alone, but of his tender interest in you.

e. *Let your praying take account of all God's interests.* He is interested in many people and in many different kinds of enterprises. He stored the physical world with many treasures, and he is interested in seeing us discover and use them. He is at work among the stars, and you can study

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them in that light, rejoicing in the fact that they belong to your Father and that he is engaged in stupendous enterprises. His is the vast enterprise of missions over the world.

f. *Let the praying be constant*, “without ceasing.” That means two things, that you are always in the attitude of prayer and that, when you have undertaken a prayer enterprise, you keep it up till the answer comes, even if it takes a half century. Pray it through, talk it out with God.

(3) As to the *Method, or Habit, of Prayer*.

a. *Make the resolution*, and keep it active in the mind, *that you will get all out of praying that can be gotten out of it*, that you will secure whatever God can do for you and for your work in behalf of others.

b. *Make a special study of all the teachings of the Bible about praying*. You might spend a season on that subject. Then about once a year study the subject afresh.

c. *Read the stories of the prayer-life of eminent servants of God* and, in the reading of biography, note the illustrations of the power of prayer in men's lives. Take the cases of Moody, Gen. Chinese Gordon, and General Havelock as instances.

d. *Have regular times for prayer* in which you can be absolutely alone. Jesus was wise in saying, “Shut the door” when you enter your closet for your private, personal prayer. The reason is that, if you are aware of the fact that your

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door is unlocked, you will have the consciousness that you might be interrupted at any minute and, therefore, your mind will be divided, you cannot concentrate your thoughts in prayer. It is strictly necessary to be alone with God at times, even at regular times. Moses was alone with God when the call and the glory came to him at the burning bush. Jacob was alone with God when he had that vision which ultimately changed his life. Isaiah and God were shut up together when the prophet saw himself and humanity and God in a new light. Paul was caught up into the third heaven, and he and God seemed to be the only ones in existence. John on the Island of Patmos saw that panorama of apocalyptic glory when no one was near but God. You must be alone with God, in the consciousness that you are face to face with him.

e. *Have special seasons of prayer.* Appoint a day of worship for yourself. Take a holiday for prayer and take your prayer-list with you. Remember the whole church, the officers, the various groups, the missionaries, the general workers of the denomination and of all Christian bodies, the rulers of the land, the interests of the community. (Matt. 5 : 44; Eph. 6 : 18-20; 1 Tim. 2 : 1-3.) Keep a list of the unconverted of the congregation and those belonging to the families of the church. Have the names and needs of the afflicted ever in your mind. Let your praying be concrete, specific, personal. Take heed to your prayer-life. Talk much with God.

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### **3. Working with God**

This is a third way of securing the power you must get from God—working with him. Of course, if you do anything at all that is right, you work with God, because you work with the material which he has created and placed in the soil, or under the soil, or in the air, or in the sun and moon and stars; or you utilize the laws which he has made, like the law of cause and effect, the law of gravity, the law of the seasons, etc.; or you use those powers of your own which are his gift, the powers of body and mind and personality; or you work with other human beings who are made by him.

You work much with him unconsciously. But if you should do all that I have been speaking of consciously, aware of the Source of all, delighting in your Colaborer, it would take on a new interest and value to you and its effect on others would be greater. But there are things that you cannot do at all unless you work with him consciously. You accomplish things you would never think of undertaking at all except that you know he and you are working at that task—bringing people to their Saviour, comforting the troubled, discipling the souls of people, and perfecting them in Christ. You take his Son into your life. His Spirit transforms you. His word enlightens you as you seek to do his will. The common work he and you do establishes contacts between you. You respond to him and

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receive his power. You obey him and get the shock of his will. You associate with him in work, and that brings you the power of his thought and heart.

### **Some Suggestions**

1. *Make every task* you do, even the most material, *a conscious participation with him in some purpose of his*, as Paul says, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." There is nothing on earth you may do in any calling that is not a work of partnership with God. Make that fact a part of your consciousness and enjoy it to the full.

2. As he does nothing without calling us into partnership with him, *get as deep into his work as he will allow you to go*. It is simply glorious. "We are laborers together with God" in everything that he does for men. Working with his wisdom and love and strength you become endowed with them.

## V

### SOME THINGS THAT HELP

#### 1. The Church

There is first of all the help that comes from the church as a whole. That body of people with their enterprises and virtues reenforces you at every point. The consciousness of being a part of it, a vital part at that, exhilarates, warms, intensifies, guides you. It is as if you were the inlet of a great ocean whose tides sweep through you.

Here are three things you must by all means do, with conscience and high purpose and the greatest possible intelligence:

(1) *Attend the meetings of the church*—all of them. If there is one of them that you must neglect, let it be the one that can most easily spare you. But do not select one for neglect, unless it is simply imperative. There are all sorts of reasons, given by a great many different men, for attending church, from men like Roosevelt, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Gladstone, and—well, the list is too long to try to give.

You can see some of those reasons instantly and can feel them all as soon as they are mentioned. They appeal to your reason, to your heart's love, to your higher self-interest, to your

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fidelity, to your patriotism, to your community interest, to your ambition to become the best person you can, to your honor, to your comradeship with your fellow Christians.

You get truths that you need.

You get fervor and motive for your tasks.

You get pleasure that you cannot get anywhere else.

You get protection against your perils, seen and unseen.

You get the love of people.

You get the help of people.

You get opportunities for work.

You find your work.

But, as much as you get, you give still more, and that is the better thing of the two.

You give cheer to those who are there.

You cheer the preacher.

You find some one, now and then, who would have been desolate all his life, but for what you said or offered him there.

You give your church a rating in the community by attending.

You prove to all that there is such a thing as fidelity, and that is needed in the community.

You help some one else to find his work.

You not only escape that miserable feeling that you have not been square with the people with whom you have a standing engagement to go to church, but you encourage all the other members to be square and you help. When you go, sit with members of your own family. If there are chil-

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dren with you, keep them in the pew with you, for there is the greatest sort of need of teaching them to worship together both as a family and as part of the group which constitutes the church. If the younger members of the family seat themselves in church according to their caprices or their changing comradeships, they fail to grow into the right habits of social worship and private worship. You cannot pray alone unless you sometimes pray with others, nor can you pray well in a social meeting unless you can pray alone. There is a multitudinous element in us that requires that we meet in the congregation with others of like mind, and there the younger members of the family must learn reverence and the expression of it.

(2) Not only attend the church, but *support it*, support it with an intelligent and true conscience, with system and with good cheer, giving, as it may need your support, according to your ability. The support of the church is investing rather than giving; it is a way of securing to yourself and to your kindred the greatest of all values. In another chapter I have spoken of the moral value and the right use of money.

(3) *Bear your own personal part in the worship* at the meetings of the church. Sing in the choir if you have that sort of talent. Teach or act as an officer in the Sunday school, if you are fitted for it and are asked to do so. Lead in prayer or even lead a meeting when it is suitable. Fit yourself for any or all of these duties.

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The midweek meeting for prayer has been rightly called the thermometer of the church. You cannot be so gifted by nature or so developed in your Christian character that you will not need the help you can gain at the prayer-meeting. You can never live among a people who will be so perfect as not to need the help that you can give them by going to the prayer-meeting. There you try out the promises of God; you learn the deepest lessons of all; you find the deepest needs disclosed; you come into touch with people whom you can help in special ways—burdened, anxious, discouraged, undisciplined, willing, helpful people. Your own needs will disclose themselves at the prayer-meeting as at no other meeting, and you will find help coming to you.

### **2. The Denomination**

You get help from the whole body of the church through your consciousness of being a vital part of it; but you must cultivate the deep consciousness of being a part of the great denomination which has achieved such a glorious task and is now engaged in such glorious world-wide enterprises. "I am a part of that body," you say to yourself, and you feel glad and grateful and hopeful and purposeful.

Inform yourself about all the doings of the denomination, its enterprises and problems. Do that by reading the denominational papers, by becoming acquainted with just as many of the general and local leaders as you can, and by at-

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tending the larger meetings. Be sure to attend the annual sessions of the Association to which your church belongs. Go to the State or Province meeting as often as possible. Make it a point to attend the general convention.

### **3. Friends**

You get special help from your more intimate, personal friends. Some of them are in your home church. They encourage you by their example. They help you to see the things you have in common. That enriches you. They join with you in your common tasks, pass through campaigns with you for the extension of Christ's kingdom, and contribute to your own development. You work and plan and purpose and pray and worship and war together till you become almost essential to each other's happiness. I have seen old comrades in the war for righteousness, who could scarcely endure a day when they did not see each other. One of the most beautiful sights in the church is that of such friendships. And they are common.

Find friends in the church. They will illustrate life for you. They will do team-work with you. They will give you an opportunity to serve them. They will show you how not to do. They will adorn and honor you.

### **4. Literature**

(1) *The fugitive literature, periodicals.* There are at least three papers you should read every

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week. One is the denominational paper which covers your territory. That will keep you informed on what the denomination is doing. It is the best assistant pastor any church can have. If the paper costs you two dollars and fifty cents a year, that is only five cents a week. If you really cannot afford it, then go in with some one else or several others and take it in partnership. It would be difficult properly to value the work done by those papers for the denomination and for the general cause of Christ. Another is the mission paper. Still another is the Sunday school paper which not only gives expositions of the lessons, week by week, but discusses methods of work in detail and guides you in your study and in Sunday school work. The daily paper may be read in a distinctly Christian way with important results in your thought and usefulness.

(2) *The more permanent literature, books.* It is literally true that "of the making of books there is no end." You can get many of the books of a general character at the public library. I would often buy a good book of permanent value to you as a Christian and as a church-member, a book on the Bible, a book on some phase of the Sunday school enterprise, a book on missions, a book of biography, the life of some great man or woman who has wrought for God and humanity. Accumulate a worker's library. There are so many books on all these subjects that a wise selection is not difficult to make. Look over the list at the bookstore. Confer with your pastor.

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Read the reviews in the papers. Consult with some expert. There is always one book that is the best of all. Get that one. Get the best one on each line of study. Another suggestion: Borrow books and read them, but be sure to return them. Still another suggestion: Lend them as fast as you get them read, and keep them going.

### **5. The Sabbath**

The Sabbath is God's answer to a fundamental need of all men of every nation for one day in seven for rest and opportunity to nurture the higher life and to render the higher service to each other. Jesus endorsed and restored it after it had been terribly misused and also suffered from disuse. The civil Sabbath is on the same day and is necessary. The law of rest for all is necessary in order to have a day of rest for each one. You must rest that day from habitual toil unless your toil is some work of mercy or of necessity as provided for by God and by the laws of the land. And you must use the day as one of rare opportunity. There are two shameless abuses of the day, one from the pursuit of money-getting and the other from the pursuit of pleasure. All sorts of perils threaten the very existence of the day. When it goes, homes will go, governments will go, unselfishness will pass away from the world. The Sabbath is an instrument with which you work. Keep it sacredly. Use it for the highest purposes of worship and religious ministry.

## VI

### DIFFICULTIES AND ENCOURAGEMENTS

Of course, there are difficulties in the way of your complete success. Your work would not be interesting or worth while if it was easy.

#### 1. Difficulties

There are three classes of difficulties: *Some you find within yourself.* You have limitations, and you are keenly aware of them; in truth, the uncomfortable fact is that you seem to become more keenly aware of them all the time: limitations on your talents, or on your culture, or on your will-power, or on your whole-heartedness, or on the nobility of your ideals and thoughts and ways. It may also be a limitation on your reputation and standing, due to some sin or blunder of yours of which you may, or may not, be aware. It may be some natural fault of yours which repels people or distresses them, a fault like envy, or jealousy, or avarice, or impulsive speech, or violent temper, or intolerance, or gossip, or deceit—some natural tendency which you have not learned how to subdue or exterminate. It may be worse, or it may be the milder fault of shyness, or morbidness, or tactlessness, if that can be called a mild fault. There are so many

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difficulties within you. Two things should encourage you. One is that there is a way of curing them, and Christ has the cure in his possession. Get into right accord with him, and you are safe. Another encouragement is that, when people see that you are fighting a battle with yourself and doing it in the right spirit, they will applaud you and trust you. They will appreciate you all the more for your nobility in making the fight. Your success will be all the more distinguished for the difficulties overcome. If you have done wrong, retract it and repair the wrong. That will advance you in the esteem of all who know about it. If your standing has been poor, it will be all the better for your effort to regain your right place.

*Another group of difficulties is found in the people in whose interest you work and in those who work with you.* All of them have faults, possibly as bad as yours, possibly worse. Remember two facts—that God has done something for you and therefore he can do much for them and through them; also that it takes time to get results. So master yourself in the name and by the power of Christ, and work on.

*Another set of difficulties is in the circumstances in which you work.* The ethical and social habits of the community may be against you. Perhaps the people are pleasure-mad or society-mad or money-mad. There may be marked skepticism or irreligion in the life of the people. Estrangements and enmities may divide the com-

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munity, or some of the families of the community, or even members of the same families. The level of culture may be low, interest in the things of the spirit subordinated to interest in the things of the letter or of the flesh. The number of Christians may be so small compared with the rest of the population as to make you and your associates feel lonely and insufficient. The social or financial importance of the people outside the churches, or their culture, or their natural traits may seem to put you and the other Christians at a disadvantage. It may even be possible that you are poorly adjusted in some one element of your relational life and you feel that it is a fatal handicap. Whether you have these peculiar difficulties or not, you have the sinful nature that is common to all men to contend with and to overcome.

### **2. Encouragements**

*If God saved you and your associates in work, he surely ought to be able to accomplish his purpose for those in whom you are interested. They may not be less promising than "some of you." Remember how Paul recounted the awful vices of the people at Corinth and then said, "And such were some of you, but ye are washed," etc. Cheer up.*

*Again, remember that your Christian character is the most powerful human means which God uses at all. Live the life well, and you will make an impression on your environment, however ob-*

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stinate and obdurate. Even though in your relational life there be adverse elements, they cannot withstand you and Christ combined, especially when the Spirit of God dwells within you, informing you, energizing you, directing you, building you up in Christ. If you are Christlike, your character will flow along the channels of your connection with people in the domestic, religious, social, business, educational relations in which you live.

Also, *remember that this enterprise of yours as a Christian is God's*. It was his before you made it yours. He initiated it. He first saw the *goal* you are driving for, away off yonder. It is his *purpose* you are carrying out. The *plan* on which you work is his plan. The *power* with which you work comes from him. His *presence* is assured and is a fact every minute you are at work in thought or ideal or act. His *partnership* is what gives coherence and continuity and stability to both you and your work. "We are God's fellow laborers," says Paul to the Corinthians. Said Jesus in the book of Revelation to John, "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame and sat down with my Father in his throne." "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Others will help you to succeed, "finish what you begin and what you fail of win," as the lines have it. "Wherefore, . . . let us lay aside every weight, . . . and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."

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This is your deepest and dearest thought :

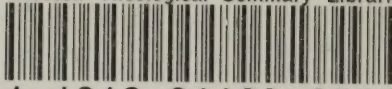
I ask no heaven till earth be thine,  
No glory crown while work of mine  
Remaineth here.  
When earth shall shine among the stars,  
Her sins wiped out, her captives free,  
Her voice a music unto thee,  
For crown new work give thou to me;  
Lord, here am I.







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